THE BREATH IN THE WINDS

By Frederick F. Shannon, D.D.

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AND OTHER SERMONS

BY

FREDERICK F. SHANNON

Pastor of the Reformed Church-on-the-Heights,
Brooklyn

Author of "The Soul's Atlas," "The New Personality," "The Enchanted Universe," etc.

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To the Memory of

LIEUTENANT EARL TRUMBULL WILLIAMS,

Christian Patriot and Member of the

REFORMED CHURCH-ON-THE-HEIGHTS,

Whose Soul was in France when his Body was

Suddenly Stricken while on a Mission of

Love and Comradeship Here at

Home; and to his Sorrowing

and Devoted Mother,

HARRIET TRUMBULL WILLIAMS,

This Volume is Gratefully Dedicated

LIFE RECORDS

By Harriet Trumbull Williams

When the mind a kingdom is,
Peopled with historic men,
Life is full of brilliant forms,
As if their spirits lived again.

Many dwell in realms of books,
Nor heed the great world passing by,
Not minding if the hours lag,
Nor murmuring when the minutes fly.

A thousand years are not too long
Wisdom's store to search and know,
And riches rare it ever gains
As generations come and go.

Paradise must all unfold
Men pondered o'er in mortal state:
Minds must ripen and expand
When we've passed the Heavenly Gate.

Worlds of knowledge, wealth of years,
Crystalized by Time and Age,
Tableted upon the spheres,
Graven as on marble page!—

Reading with the spirit eyes
All these wondrous records o'er,
We shall learn without surprise
Marvels Angels knew before!

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I

THE BREATH IN THE WINDS

"Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live."—EZE. xxxvii. 9.

THE text is from what is familiarly known as Ezekiel's vision of dry bones. At first glimpse, it is an utterly discouraging situation. The condition of Israel is so hopeless, so paralyzed, so ruinously undone in morality and religion and faith in God, that one wonders if there is any power that can work regeneration and reformation. Can beauty be given for these ashes? They are everywhere; the nation is buried beneath them. Can some oil of joy be found for this spirit of heaviness? It bows minds and hearts and wills into the dust. Truly, the malady is not local nor slight—it is deep, loathsome, horrible. But we must remember that religion always takes a second look. So Ezekiel is faithful, but he is not faithless. Average mortals would shun this valley; they would wipe it off

*Delivered before the Baptist Ministers' Association of New York and Vicinity, in the Madison Avenue Baptist Church, Monday, January 8, 1917.

their mental slate; they would say it has no place in the sun of reality. But Ezekiel goes into it, inspects it, interrogates it, commands it, subdues it, cultivates it, brings out of it one of the most helpful and hopeful messages a prophet of God ever proclaimed to the world. What does he see? What does he say? What is back of his seeing and saying? That is our line of thought.

I

We begin our inquiry, then, at the beginning. "Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones." It is not a prepossessing audience, this congregation of bones that God addresses. But bones are no obstacle to the bone-maker. Having originally organized carbonate, phosphate, and gelatin into bones, may not even fleshless bones hear the word of the Lord? For Ezekiel is saying that within and behind all desolation is the living God. And is not this what we want to know, what we must know, if we are to keep our souls alive? Let a man be perfectly sure of God, and he can release his hold upon everything else without being utterly confounded; on the other hand, let him grasp everything else very tenaciously, with no certain grip upon God, and he is the victim of terrible confusion. It is so of Ezekiel's day; it is so of Paul's day; it is so of our day; it is so of all days.

Now the way in which the prophet asserts this truth is original, instructive, inspiring. In one aspect, he paints a picture of starkest realism. In his mind's eye, Israel represents desolation incarnate, despair in cerements, death uncoffined. Search as you may, you will find no gleam, no softening hues, only jagged, ragged patches of gray waste. For, mark you, he does not reveal a graveyard, with its orderly graves and quiet walks and decently buried bones. He shows us, if I may so express it, a graveyard turned upside down, the disjointed bones scattered everywhere. In this black valley of death the bones are many and very dry. Scavengers have done their work —sinews are gone, flesh is gone, skin is gone. This, then, is Ezekiel's picture—not mine nor any other man's; but it is not the whole picture.

For strangely enough, we encounter a blending of realism and idealism in this desert of doom. Yes; idealism is here—only it is not of the altogether human stamp. What shall I call it? At the risk of being paradoxical, contradictory, even unphilosophic, I will say it is divine idealism, the idealism of God, the pure white truth of things shining behind all outward appearances. "And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live?" Who says that? Who asks this question thrilling with life in the heart of gloom and doom and death? It is the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, who fainteth

not, neither is weary. Ah! when men say that the universe is composed of matter, energy, and ether, and nothing else—it is then that the breath in the winds breathes from behind this mental sterility, this spiritual degradation, saying: "O sons of men, sons of the living God, your dry bones shall live!" Or when men declare that the bottom has dropped out of the heavens and the earth, the breath in the winds says: "Thus saith the Lord, which maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters; which bringeth forth the chariot and horse, the army and the power; they lie down together, they shall not rise; they are extinct, they are quenched as flax. Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold I will do a new thing; now shall it spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. The beasts of the field shall honor me, the jackals and the ostriches: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen: the people which I have formed for myself, that they might set forth my praise."

Then what shall we say of our present international valley of dry bones? Desolation stalks abroad so dread and terrible that the nations seem to be in the grip of a kind of planetary nightmare. Is there any hope to be shed upon this vast valley of despair? Many are ominously

shaking their heads. "Civilization is doomed," they say. "Statesmanship is bankrupt. The young men, the flower and hope of the race, are being appallingly decimated. Millions have been slain, more millions will die, other millions will go broken in spirit and body to the grave." Verily, it is horrible, unspeakable, overwhelming.

Heaven forbid that I, or any other man, should undertake to lightly heal the wounds of the world. That has already been attempted too often and to the deep wrong of men's souls. But having gone round about this modern Ezekiel-valley, having seen the bones thereof in all their withered ghastliness, may I venture to suggest this: *Even the blackest valley offers opportunity for the soul to listen. And wherever there is a listening soul, there God is; and where God is, desolation lightens from within and behind, ruins are clothed with verdure and bloom.* "Son of man, can these bones live?"—that is the first flash of light in the darkness. But it is a most kindly light, a light that enables one to say:

"Soon I shall pass behind
This changing veil to that which does not change,
My tired feet will range
In some green valley of eternal mind
Where Truth is daily like the water's song."

II

The breath in the winds proclaims a second truth: That within all real and apparent confusion there is a mysterious order. "And the bones came together, bone to his bone." Studied superficially, the universe is just a huge skeleton, with its dismembered bones strewn over the fields of space. But on closer view, we find that every bone is in search of his fellow bone, that things widely separated in time and space are out on a march to get together, that mechanism passes into organism, that organism is the servant of a moral order, that a moral order is dependent upon a moral God, that the blood of God flows through the veins and arteries of the universe. At least three lines of approach emphasize a world order.

First of all, there is the physical. Thinking our way back to the beginning, the genesis of the earth, for example, we used to speak of it as chaos. But the modern thinker argues that there never was any chaos, that the cosmos was enfolded in the nebula, that the earth's beauty and order have grown from that original swarm of meteorites. Knowing something of the tactics of Nature, is it not permissible to conclude that there is a wondrous strategy, an immeasurable Wisdom back of Nature, that the end is hinted in the beginning? We must rest upon this some-

thing which is primal and self-subsistent, said Kant, something which secures its continuance and self-preservation, or the universe itself must sink into the abyss of nothingness. Lafcadio Hearn—that interesting cosmopolite, born in the Ionian Islands of an English father and a Greek mother, educated in England and France, trained as a journalist in America and finally a teacher and citizen of Japan—has a suggestive story of an heirloom that may be seen in almost any ancient Japanese family. A little box is placed before you. You open the box and see only a beautiful silk bag. Opening this bag you will find within it another silk bag, of a different quality of silk, but exceedingly fine. You open the second bag only to find a third, the third contains a fourth, the fourth a fifth, the fifth a sixth, the sixth a seventh, "which contains the strongest, roughest, hardest vessel of Chinese clay that you ever beheld." Curious and precious, it may also be more than a thousand years old. Is it not a parable of man taking the bandages off the physical world? One by one he peels them away, silken bags of matter within silken bags of matter, until he finds something very precious, ages upon ages old—even the clear purpose of God at the heart of the worlds, the breath in the winds blowing atoms and galaxies forever on toward their predetermined goal.

The second path to order is mental. "The pos-

tulate which underlies every scientific induction," says Professor Pringle-Pattison, "is the intelligibility of the universe—the belief, in other words, that we are living in a cosmos, not a chaos, the belief that the Power at work in the universe will not put us to permanent intellectual confusion. This is an ultimate trust, which is not capable of demonstration, though *progressively verified and justified by every step we take in the intellectual conquest of the world.*" Look, then, at the unfolding process: First, dust; second, single or many-celled living creatures—a great forward stride, for dust is tingling with life; third, the possession by animals of a centralized nervous system; fourth, the advent of Man, with "a new series of differentiations and integrations," which open upon highways of illimitable progress.

The third path to order is personality. Here we come upon two of the crowning human wonders—self-consciousness and self-direction. Personality is the spiritual flower growing on the upper and outer side of matter. Entering the lower side of matter, though it did not begin there, personality has steadily stemmed the tide of dirt, until it stands forth at last crowned with honour and dominion and immortality. For matter is beset on every side by mind, matter is porous with mind, and as God and Man come closer and closer together in Christ Jesus, mind will more

and more assert its authority over matter. In building the Simplon Tunnel, workmen began on the Switzerland side while other workmen began on the Italian side of the great mountain. Day by day they blasted their way through the mountain's rocky heart, until one morning Swiss and Italian engineers and laborers stood face to face. The dirt had been scooped away, the rocky ledges had been blown to atoms, the darkness had vanished before the golden floods of sunlight. The victorious toilers laughed and sang and shouted for joy. Which thing is a picture, however crude, of the universe, this gigantic mountain of matter which mind is ceaselessly toiling upon and tunneling through. God is smiting it from the invisible side, Man is smiting it from the visible, the walls are growing thinner and thinner. The Divine Mind is out on the march to meet the Human, the Human is out on the journey to find the Divine. They are as certain to stand face to face, having fought their way through matter and force and sin and death, as Swiss and Italian engineers stood face to face in 1904. Every bone shall ultimately find its brother bone. Now we see through a glass darkly, but then we shall see face to face. We are already the tear-stained children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be—imagination is not able to picture it all; but we know that if He shall be manifested, having cleaved His way through matter and sin

and hell to meet us, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him even as He is. Man may be "stuccoed all over with quadrupeds," but he is also streaked with glory, shot through and through with imperishable worth, so dear unto God that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

III

The breath in the winds asserts a third truth: That within death there is life. "The breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army." The movement of God is from desolation through order to conquest. He begins with an inverted graveyard, welds the disunities into harmony, out of defeat brings victory. "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." Life—that is the reality we have been searching for. Life—that is synonymous with the Gospel, the secret of the evangel, the Good News of Eternity flashed into the fields of time. What have we to testify concerning this Life, which we have seen with our spiritual eyes, which we have handled with our spiritual hands? Speaking in general, we know that it looks death out of countenance, that it transforms a valley of dry bones into a Garden of God. But let us be more specific.

We know that this Life is abundant, inexhaustible, incapable of giving out. Men regard with awe the enormous reservoirs of physical life. Innumerable discoveries have been made, but no man has yet discovered a fraction of space where life is not. Overhead, underfoot, within, around, life is so busy that death has small chance of slipping in. About the best that death can do in the physical realm is to get life to change its form. Life is so amazingly prolific and purposeful that it refuses to be outwitted. Apparently out-maneuvered, life invariably returns for another and more convincing word with death. Out there rolls the sea to-day, but there the forest once grew; and here where Broadway pounds and roars was once the sea. Even the hills, as Tennyson said, are but shadows that flow from form to form. Yet both hills and shadows flowingly are because life abidingly is. Now nothing less than this plenitude of physical life adequately suggests the abundance of spiritual life disclosed in Christ. The Gospels are packed full of it, the Epistles are alive with it. They are what they are because of what He was and is. The modern mind makes much of the power of under-statement. As one studies the New Testament, he wonders if this so-called power was known to so deep and perceiving a soul as Paul. But if we are somewhat superstitious concerning the potencies of the physical, Paul enjoyed what is at once

a sober and an intoxicating faith in the abundant Life-giver. "For I am persuaded," he says, "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

We know, furthermore, that this Life is available. There are so many good things that cannot be had by multitudes. For example, health, wealth, learning, comfort, travel, position. These, as well as other blessings, are good, yet they are not universally available. But the best thing in the universe is available. It is nothing less than life, eternal life. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." Everybody *may* have what everybody *must* have, if everybody *will* have it. Watching various vessels gliding to and fro on the Bay, I said to a man: "It looks to me as if they would wear the water out. This constant going and coming of all kinds of hulls—surely the water must get weary and tired of it." Smiling the smile of an old seaman, and gazing at "the clucking, sucking of the sea about the rusty hulls," he replied: "The more there are, the faster they go and come, the better the sea seems to like it." Ah! the boats wear out, but the sea wears on. There have been many different styles of vessels since man began to sail the deep; there will

be many more; boat fashions will change and shore lines will change; civilizations will wax and wane; but the sea, unworn and unwearying, will go patiently on shaping itself to all kinds of vessels, always yearning to have its face wrinkled by innumerable plunging prows. Is it not even so of the Water of Life? It is available to all, it satisfies the thirst of all, it longs to be appropriated by all. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life."

We know that this Life is the measure of finality. Nothing can be added to it, nothing can be subtracted from it. It is full, perfect, unaging, absolute. "Why have we only one Christ?" Principal Fairbairn used to ask. There have been philosophers many, poets many, soldiers many, statesmen many, but not a single one has merited the palm of solitary and unapproachable excellence. Christ, and Christ alone, stands without compeer, and that in the highest department, the religious, among all the sons of men. "Our question," concludes Fairbairn, "is, Why? Why has the Creator of men created only one Christ, while He has created myriads of all other kinds of men?" That Creator is infinitely benevolent; He loves His creatures, He seeks their highest well-being. That well-being Christ has promoted not only

more than any other man, but more than all other men that have ever lived. If one Christ has been so mighty for good, what would a multitude have accomplished? Yet God has given to our poor humanity only one, and if we persist in asking, Why? can we find a better answer than the answer that stands written in the history of the Word made flesh? God in giving *one* gave *His* all: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life." Here is finality—not the finality of power, not the finality of will, not the finality of mind, but the finality of power and will and mind all fused in heart—the broken, bleeding, brooding heart of redemptive passion and rescue. Do you not remember Norman Macleod's story of the Highland Mother? She was a widow; she had only one child; she was unable to pay her rent; she was threatened with eviction. Taking her babe, she started to walk across the mountains, some ten miles, to the home of a relative. When she started, the weather was warm and sweet and mild, a lovely day in May. But a terrible snowstorm suddenly fell upon the hills, and little by little the mother's strength failed. But in her failing strength there seemed to be a growing love, even as she made her grave in the snow; for next day, when men found her body, it was almost stripped of clothing. Her chilled and dy-

ing hands had wrapped her own clothing about the child, which was found in a sheltering nook, safe and sound. Years afterward, said Macleod, the son of the minister who had conducted the mother's funeral, went to Glasgow to preach a preparatory sermon. It was a stormy night, the audience was small, and somehow he was reminded of the story he had often heard his father tell. Instead of preaching the sermon he had prepared, he simply told the story of the Highland mother's love. A few days later he was summoned to the bed of a dying man. "You do not know me," said the man, whom the minister had never seen. "But I know you, and I knew your father before you. Although I have lived in Glasgow many years, I have never attended a church. The other day I happened to pass your door as the snow came down. I heard the singing and slipped into a back seat. There I heard the story of the widow and her son." The man paused, his voice was choking, his eyes were filling. "I am that son," he sobbed at last. "Never did I forget my mother's love, but I never saw the love of God in giving Himself for me until now. It was God made you tell that story. My mother did not die in vain. Her prayer is answered."

All that I have been trying to say, my brethren, is this: Where everything else ends, God begins, because God was in the beginning and God

will still be God when the endings have all ended. That is the message of religion; it is especially the message of the Christian religion; it is the one hope of the world, and beside it there is no hope. For the voice in the winds is a just voice, a true voice, an honest voice. It says: "Go round about your valley of dry bones; see how the besom of destruction has swept the world; look the facts in the face, if you are struck blind while you look. But do not fear—desolation cannot harm you. Do not be overwhelmed—chaos is big with order. Do not despair—death cannot kill you. Do not be imposed upon by a whole world of dry bones—before there was any world or any bones, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Therefore, come from the four winds, O Breath, come from behind matter and energy and ether and sin and death and hell, and breathe upon our slain hopes, our slain wills, our slain minds, our slain ideals, and cause them to stand upon their feet and live, an exceeding great army, that we may go forth conquering and to conquer in the name of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us!

II

THE PRIORITY OF THE SPIRITUAL

"Seek ye first His kingdom, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."—St. Matt. vi. 33.

MEN sometimes say, without measuring their words, that the Sermon on the Mount is good enough for them. They are the so-called practical men who have little patience with the mystical, the inspirational in life or religion. Well, the Sermon on the Mount ought to be good enough for them, to say the least. Where else can you find such insight into the character of God? Where else is there such a lofty appreciation of man? Where else is there such a profound reading of the universe? Take, for example, that brief section in this 6th chapter of St. Matthew, from the 25th to the 33d verses. What have we here? First, that this is God's world. Is not that a very great thing to know? Second, that God's providential care is over the minutest things in His world. Is Newton's discovery more important than this? Third, that in a special manner man is the object of God's care. If you really believe that God

cares for you, as Stevenson said, where is there any room for despair and unhappiness? If you do not believe that God cares for you, you are to be pitied indeed. Fourth, that the goal toward which all things move is the Kingdom of God. Just take these four things, the like of which cannot be found in all the literature of the race, brood over them, pray them in, begin to practice them out, and see if the Sermon on the Mount is not good enough for men and angels, too. In our text, the Master emphasizes "The Priority of the Spiritual," setting forth man's false and true attitude to the Kingdom of God.

I

The clanging, discordant elements in human life are traceable to false relationships; this is the Master's deep and faithful reading of man's heart. Beholding the stress, the anxiety, the woe, the joylessness of men, He said: "This is not the order ordained of my Father. At its core life is the home of a great gladness. Men are missing their true selves, with all their possible enrichments, because they have capitalized the unessential and minimized the fundamental. Seeking first the secondary, they have witlessly deprived themselves of both the original and its benediction. Making food, drink, and raiment their supreme quest, men lose the power of truly appreciating even these things."

Is it not a terrible vengeance indeed that our false relationships take upon us? First of all, we are set at right angles with God; and that way misery lies. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." This is one of the categorical imperatives, one of the absolute impossibles. You cannot go up and down, east and west at the same time. Gravity is against you; space is against you; the universe is against you. No more can you be the slave of the temporal and at the same time the king of the eternal. You cannot serve two masters for the very good reason that a divided heart is necessarily a traitor to both. Out of tune with God, does it not follow that a man must be out of tune with himself? He is deaf to the higher tones of life; he is blind to the pleading beauty of the world; he is dead to the raptures of the eternal. What advantage has such a man in changing his place? Milton knew full well that a mind cannot be changed by place or time. Is not the mind its own place, and can it not make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven? Let him seek the heights; does he not drag his misery up there? Let him descend into the depths; is not his ache of loneliness incurable by the grave? Which way he goes, he is himself a mournful monotony of jangling inharmonies. He misses life's central melody because he is the victim of dawdling ditties. He might have made himself a noble treatise on manhood had he not

diligently fashioned himself into a parody thereon. Sequentially, a third thing is manifest. He is out of harmony, also, with his fellows. He is a stranger to their hopes, joys, fears, defeats, and triumphs. He has denied himself the privilege of being grandly human. For no man can be a genuinely big, live human who is not first of all a lover of God. His creative springs are dried at their source. A godless man is nature's final abortion, the last agony of miscarried purpose in the wide-lying universe. He is only a vacant might-have-been in a world pulsing with wonder and teeming with reality. Dead to God, man fails of true individual and social relations. Seeking first food, drink, and raiment, he defrauds himself of the least and the largest, the beginning and the end, the alpha and omega of being.

Now, the seriousness of this problem of false relationships can scarcely be exaggerated. It is this that puts humanity out of joint. Strange that we do not see it more clearly and then guide our lives by the light of its vision! "A book out of place is a book lost." Thus the librarian recognizes the law and hangs this motto about the library. A woman in New Jersey stoops down and kindles a fire in an open space on a cruel winter morning. At once scores of people are seen rushing out of a nearby building. What is the relation of the woman's match to the panic-

stricken workers? "None whatever," one is disposed to say. But when he learns that the building happens to be a powder factory, then do the demented woman's innocent match and those tense faces assume very definite relations. A match out of place spells death and destruction. But what about a life out of place, a will out of place, a purpose out of place? Is not a soul of more value than a match? Its ruin may be less spectacular than a powder mill's explosion; but it is not less certain, less terrible, less complete. The decay of a soul is not so patent as the decay of a tree, but it is altogether more tragical.

Think, for a moment, of the social operation of this law of false relationships. Our age is distinguished for its restlessness and class hatreds. We cannot disguise the fact that, despite our vast philanthropic, humanitarian, and educational enterprises, whole sections of society are inflamed with hatred toward each other. And what is the backlying reason? Is it not the iron determination to put food, drink, and raiment first? Does anybody question that, if men sought first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, there would long be delay in giving a just, practical, Christian solution to our social, political, and industrial problems? Surely, no right-thinking man does question this. And yet one is bound to say that there are hordes of wild-eyed humans abroad to-day, infesting curbstones, of-

fices, factories, and drawing rooms, who brazenly assert that there is no such thing as morality, that men are dominated by the rule of the wolf pack, that the grave catches them all at last, and that is the end of the comedy. Therefore, why not eat, drink, and be merry? Beyond the reach of moral suasion, these monstrous perverts trample every human sanctity in the mire. They turn freedom of speech into a serpent's hiss, and they would make civil government a byword. And for what? For lack of the privilege of laying hold of the principles by which men and nations live? By no means! For these folk there are no such principles. Morality is a joke, decency is a misnomer, religion is a jest. Wanting food, drink, raiment—nothing more, neither God nor personal righteousness—they insist upon turning the earth into a sty, wherein men may be battened and fattened for the ultimate slaughter.

Yet the blindness of godless mass movements finds its pathetic counterpart in the self-deception individuals practice upon themselves. Your boy is in the first grade of the grammar school. He is just learning the multiplication table. Like his father before him, he finds it a hard task. But suppose the teacher insists upon his working problems in algebra, geometry, and trigonometry. "What monstrous absurdity!" you exclaim. "That teacher needs to be examined by a commission in lunacy." But your boy's teacher is not one whit

more absurd than are you when you try to solve the problem of life by seeking first food, drink, and clothing, and last, if at all, the will of God and personal goodness. The man who puts things first and God second loses both. Ruskin held that the fatal weakness of the Renaissance lay in its putting of beauty before truth. But, you ask with Keats, is not beauty truth, truth beauty? Undeniably, if you dig into the deepest soul of each; but inasmuch as we have a native fondness for the mere skin of beauty and a strange perversion for the heart of truth, it behooves us to keep truth well in the foreground, assured that beauty can then never be far away. Our best things are close at hand, if we give God priority in our lives; and I fancy that our best things will become increasingly better in the far away, because they have grown divinely beauteous through the touch of souls that made godliness supreme. Otherwise, we do but give practical meaning to the myth of Tantalus. There he stands in Tartarus up to his chin in water. Above him bends the fruit tree. Is there not water for the thirst and food for the hunger of this revealer of the secrets of the gods? In great abundance, verily. But as he sought to drink the water, it flowed away; as he attempted to pluck the fruit, it retreated beyond his grasp. Hungry and thirsty in the midst of plenty! So, standing soul-deep in life's golden river, with the fruit of

the tree of life bending above us in luscious abundance, are we not also tantalized, teased, tormented, when we make God our pale-faced possibility and things our red-blooded reality? Only God can save us from the deadly frost of custom, from the gilded slavery of false relationships. Seeking God second, we doom ourselves to the motley, indistinguishable ranks of those—

> "Who con their ritual of Routine,
> With minds to one dead likeness blent,
> And never even in dreams have seen
> The things that are more excellent.
> To dress, to call, to dine, to break
> No canon of the social code,
> The little laws that lacqueys make,
> The futile decalogue of Mode,—
> How many a soul for these things lives,
> With pious passion, grave intent!"

II

Now, the only way to displace false relationships is to inaugurate the true. And this is precisely what the Master does. The deeply positive note is never absent from His message. Christ does not offer men juiceless negations, but creative affirmations. How, then, are we to unravel our tangles, untie the hard knots we ourselves have made?

First of all, by practicing the priority of the spiritual. Let *"dom,"* the rule of God, be your

supreme motive; let personal goodness be your unflagging ideal. Thus you may live above circumstance, time, and tide. Within them, you are not of them; they are not your masters, but your heaven-appointed teachers and helpers. In all the wild elements of life, you shall exercise the taming power of the eternal; the sharp, discordant notes shall be made to swell the vaster harmony. Recognizing our true relationships, we may fill each day with a joy no man can take away from us, achieving a character whose vitalized centre enriches the whole circumference of life. For the priority of the spiritual is not a day-dream; it is a severely practical consideration. Take the man who puts his work above his wages. Is not this a matter germane to all of us? If we are not workers in some fashion; if we are not by sweat of the brow, fire of the brain, or blood of the soul, labouring in the great world-vineyard, then are we entitled to all the misery we receive here and that which is promised hereafter. But the man who says: "This particular task is mine; it is not only the means of making a living but a life; my wages are important but they shall not be put above my work itself"—is he not a practical man? Yes; but he is infinitely more; he is an instrument of the eternal, an organ of the spiritual, a disciple of the Highest. Weaponed by the might of a valiant idealism, his irresistible assaults upon the fortress of the drab

and commonplace are answered by the capitulation of the lower to the higher, of the secondary to the essential. Standing deep in the mud of earth, yet is he off in the enskied meadows of God, a playmate of the angels even while he is the true brother of men. The moment a man puts his work above his wages, he forms a partnership with the supreme, which can be broken only by his own initiative. And all the while he is helping to usher in that blessed epoch when the rule of God shall be universal, all and in all.

Or take the man who makes the interests of others equal to his own. Is he not a figure very much needed in our world? "He certainly is!" you reply, remembering how frequently you have seen the golden rule trampled under foot. But he is much more, even, than the man whom the world needs; he is the only man the world can ultimately endure. His quality of spirit, his kind of humaneness, is the sole type for which provision is made in the kingdoms of permanence. In other words, he lasts because he "puts first things first." It is the man who measures life by the golden rule here and now that will be the true ruler in the golden age. Already he brings that era near by faith, and he makes it dear by practice. His enchantments are neither temporary nor temperamental; they issue out of the changeless and eternal. "For thus saith the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity, whose

name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble heart, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." The shekinah of that divine meekness which relates him to the largeness and loftiness of eternity, such a man moves about the world's everydayness mitred with spiritual sublimity.

Meantime, a third element has manifested itself. Keeping the dignity of his work beyond mere remuneration and steadily recognizing the rights of others, his own personal enrichment has exceeded his most sanguine anticipation. It is the world-old miracle of losing to find. The valley of renunciation has led him up the hill of coronation. He is a living man, tingling with life in every pore of his being, breasting the higher heights of reality. As Vergil said of Dante, he is crowned and mitred over himself. He is a vernal, springlike soul. In all of Nature's golden wonders, what is fairer, more exhilarating than the return of spring? This globe-wandering maid of the seasons comes tripping over the frozen hills and ice-locked valleys, and lo! her footprints break into a laughter of flowers, her garments are stirred by little winds of fragrance. Fashioning sun and sky and sod into a resurrection trumpet, Spring blows her "Sleep no more!" to all the dead in Nature's tomb. At once the buried things rise into a rhythm of life

and a billow of color. So does a self-renouncing soul move across the world. He is at once a bringer of life and a distributor of hope. He is the rainbow, to use Carlyle's fine figure, to many a poor dripping day. Is it not thus that he gets him a soul "as clean as white river sand?" He gives the lie to Talleyrand's recipe for happiness —a hard heart and good digestion. Rather, his is the joy of a gentle soul, moving in the right direction. His tomb is not wrought of crumbling marble, but of the unmelting tears of widows and orphans. His hall of fame is in the living gratitude of undying spirits. His Christlike deeds are written—not "in star fire and immortal tears"—but in redeemed lives that will shine as the firmament forever and ever.

Finally, in this matter of true relationships, we have Christ's secret of ownership. "And all these things shall be added unto you." Mark well the expression. A great gulf is fixed between the life that is added unto things and the life that adds things unto itself. Broadly speaking, we divide ourselves into one of these two classes. Here, for example, is the man who is simply added unto things. He farms himself out to material interests; he places himself in the markets of temporal exchange; he sells his life to the hucksters of greed, little reckoning that it can never, never be bought back again. What, in the wide world,

is more terrible, more fatuous, more shallow-hearted and empty-headed? Does it not seem that even the most fanciless creature would remain unbribed by such outward shows and farafonade? But alas! multitudes of able men and brilliant women eagerly allow themselves to be added unto mere things. I saw 7,150 silver dollars, placed in a Broadway window for advertising purposes. It was most interesting for two reasons. First, one does not often see such a pile of silver money; there was something of unusualness about it. The second feature of interest was lent by the faces centering about that window. They did not say a word, yet those staring countenances were a kind of talking pantomime. The newsboy hushed his raucous call of "Uxtra!" for a moment, smacked his lips, and said: "O, if I could just get my hands into that pile!" The messenger boy paused on his way; his eyes flashed; his lips twitched: "Ah, if I only had it all myself!" The clerk, returning to the office from his luncheon, stopped, looked, and then turned away, saying: "Never mind! I'll have that, and more, too, one of these days!" Just then a fine-looking, venerable gentleman joined the crowd. He was coming up from his Wall Street office. The day was warm and fragrant, one of the season's prophecies of apple blossoms and soft green grass and warbling birds. He had telephoned his chauffeur not to come down that

afternoon. He said: "I won't need the automobile to-day; I'll just walk a bit for exercise." I noticed that he gave but a single glance at the money. For forty years he had washed his hands in rivers of silver and streams of gold; what were 7,150 silver dollars to him? At once he looked at the faces of the newsboy, the messenger, and the clerk. And then the old man's face began to talk. This is what he said: "Boys, you are all pathetically mistaken. Happiness is not concealed in that glinting pile there. I used to think so; but I have learned better."

Blessed is the man who has learned better! His feet are already set in the dewy paths of peace. For our lasting fortunes and imperishable worths are all within. "The kingdom of God is within you," says the Master, and every brave and just life vindicates the truth of His words. Plato taught that God holds the soul attached to Him by its roots. Is not this the secret of humanity's gnawing hunger? Rooted in Godhead, we cannot be nourished by any food short of godliness. Moreover, there is no loftier tribute to man's essential value than his obstinate refusal to make terms with his lower self. He moves into the far country, driven by the insanity of sin, only to find that neither harlots nor swine can hush his cry for Home, for his own better nature. Bleeding, marred, weeping, he brokenly returns to the Everlasting Arms. Ah! there was tragedy in the

going away and there is pathos in the coming back—tragedy and pathos too deep for tears, too sacred for words; but there is something more—there is the deep, passionate, unresting love of the pursuing God, which testifies to the prodigal's immeasurable worth. His homecoming restores the lost chord to angelic choirs. In his song, Shelley makes the cloud say: "I change, but I cannot die." It were better spoken of a human being. Changing always, dying never, man goes from epoch to epoch of his everlasting career, lashed by stinging shames, washed by blistering tears, giving his dust back to the dust, and his spirit into the hands of the living, loving God, the indignant reactions of his own soul declaring that he cannot be satisfied by things called houses, lands, stocks, bonds, silver, and gold. The cry of the ancient east becomes the sob of the modern west: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God."

Therefore, far from permitting us to be supinely added unto things, our Lord shows us how to add things unto ourselves. Given a Christianized personality, all things follow in man's train. Given everything else and lacking Christ, man is just a weltering chaos of despair. He is the plaything of Time, the vagabond of Space, the wail of Eternity. Christ sets man and the universe in their true order. Without his Lord, man is afraid

of the cosmos; with Him, he challenges it, he goes forth to give it battle, he conquers it, he adds it unto his redeemed personality. Before meeting Christ in the way, his lonely cry was: "Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of this body of death?" Now he has found his full-toned answer, the utmost eloquence of heaven pouring through a lifted life: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." On one of the ledges of the Purgatorial mountain, Dante places all those who had been slothful in this life. We see them running there to atone for their negligence while here. And as they run, they cry: "Swift, swift, that time be not lost by little love, so that zeal in well-doing may make grace green again." O, let our zeal in well-doing begin this day! Then shall the greenness of grace be fairer than the greenness of the Maytide. Seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, all things shall be added unto us, whether the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come. George MacDonald's song shall become the melody of our experience:

"Little one, you must not fret
That I take your clothes away:
Better sleep you so will get,
And at morning wake more gay—
Saith the children's mother.

"You I must unclothe again,
For you need a better dress:

Too much worn are body and brain,
You need everlastingness—
Saith the Heavenly Father.

"I went down death's lonely stair;
Laid my garments in the tomb;
Dressed again one morning fair;
Hastened up, and hied me home—
Saith the Elder Brother.

"Then I will not be afraid
Any ill can come to me;
When 'tis time to go to bed,
I will rise and go with thee—
Saith the little brother."

III

CHRIST'S MISSION

"For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."—St. Luke xix. 10.

FROM the largest viewpoint, it is worth while to inquire into the mission of any person. Even the most ordinary person, if we think deeply and truly, is the hiding place of extraordinary forces and possibilities. A human being carries a distinction that is altogether unique. In the first place, there is not another individual in the universe exactly like him. In the second place, he is definitely marked off from all realms of matter. And matter, as men are studying it to-day, reveals wonders which stagger the imagination. An English scientist says that if a gram of radium were instantaneously and completely dissociated, it would hurl the English fleet from the Channel to the summit of Mount Blanc. Yet all the radium in the world, and all the matter in our own and other planets, is less mysterious than the most ordinary human personality. But if the mission of an ordinary person is, in the last analysis, important, what

shall we say of the mission of the uniquest Person in history or out of it? Moreover, when this Supreme Person, in His life, character and works, insists that His coming to earth is to save the men and women in it, how shall we adequately measure His mission? We simply cannot do it; it lies beyond our powers. We may, however, take a few concrete illustrations—human types that survive from generation to generation—that will enable us to appreciate more fully "Christ's Mission," as set forth in His own words: "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

I

Among the human types profoundly in need of the Saviour is the Pharisee. "And He spake also a parable unto certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and set all others at naught." This Pharisaic man is afflicted by stupendous egotism. "I—I—I—I," is his vital breath, his song by day, his dream by night. The rest of the world is just a kind of backyard to the imposing forefront of his own importance. Some one has suggested that if his prayer had been a little longer, and furthermore, had it been necessary to print it, the printer would have been compelled to order a new font of capital "I's." Moreover, according to his own account, he is a very

peculiar individual, strikingly singular, emphatically different—"not as the rest of men." "You see," casually remarks this Pharisaic spirit, "I am just a bit out of the ordinary run of folk." And then he looks wise, nudges himself twice over, taps his long, gaunt forefinger and proceeds to point out his unlikeness. What is his much-vaunted difference? Just this: He is an expert confessor of other men's sins. The extortioners, the unjust, the adulterers, the publicans, have all found a mouthpiece in him. But what about his own sins? On that point he is conspicuously uncommunicative. His own sins must have been buried under the ruins of those personal pronouns, swallowed alive by his wide-mouthed egotism.

Turn now from the Pharisee to the publican. Standing afar off, he smites his breast, refuses to even lift his eyes unto heaven, and prays: "God, be merciful to me the sinner." Compared with the other, this prayer is as musical as a silver wind blowing out of a golden sunset. It is the kind of prayer, says the Master, that sends new pulsations of joy quivering through heaven and causes the angels to learn new tunes. The publican, broken-hearted for his sin, appeals from his own sinfulness unto the mercy of God. That is always an acceptable prayer. It offers God an opportunity to bare His arm of salvation. For this publican, mark you, definitely describes his

condition. He is direct, unambiguous, strikes the centre. He is a sinner, and says so, bluntly, brokenly. He was not in a sin-trance. Is not that our trouble to-day—are we not in a kind of trance about sin? Not about the fact—the reality cries aloud on every street corner; but about our own sense of sin, our own responsibility for sin, our own and our brothers' need of a Saviour from sin. Asked what was the great want of modern life, Mr. Gladstone said deliberately, measuring every word: "Ah, a sense of sin; that is the great want of modern life." We may expunge sin from the dictionary, but it will remain in the heart, in the will, in the brain. Sin goes out only when Christ comes in; sin laughs at our current euphemism.

"In olden times when people heard
Some swindler huge had come to grief,
They used a good old Saxon word
And called that man a thief.

But language such as that to-day
Upon men's tender feelings grates;
So people smile and simply say
He—'rehypothecates.'"

But while people smile, sin gets in its work—hideous, deadly, destructive. Do you think sin is less sinful because, forsooth, you dress it up in the new psychology, tog it out in the vapid phrasings of "the modern mind," explain it away in the

lingo of present-day cults? Is a rattlesnake less dangerous because a soft-chiming silver bell is attached to its neck by a silken thread? Does rough-on-rats lose its deadly power because it is served in a pinch of sugar? Is a cyclone less terrible because some fool says: "It is only the murmuring of the west wind?" Yet the rattlesnake, the poison, and the cyclone are not to be feared like sin. Let them do their worst, they kill only the body; but sin destroys both soul and body. Our day would be spiritually enriched by imitating the publican's candor, calling sin by its right name, and praying God, for Christ's sake, to forgive it. Sin cannot be wafted away on verbal perfume. The scientific scapegoat may bear it off into the wilderness of speculation, but in due time the goat starves to death, while sin comes back more vigorous, more subtle, more loathsome than ever. Only the Lamb of God can take away the sin of the world.

Well, what is to be done for this grim old Pharisee, standing stark, godless, and unrepentant in the temple of our souls? Is there any medicine in the pharmacy of the skies that can cure him of his self-righteousness? Is there any "living water" that can soak down into the dry, crusty soil of his soul and drench him through and through, so that green spiritual realities may get a chance to put forth their verdure? Has anybody ever come down out of the starry land of

God—anybody with power enough, and patience enough, and love enough, to save this petrified, fossilized pharisee, who goes stalking, bragging, blustering through my heart and yours? Yes, my friends, Some One has come; He is here now; just listen to the beating of your own heart, and you will hear Him saying: "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

II

Another familiar human type is the moralist. He is painted from life in the Gospels. Men call him the Rich Young Ruler. Consider him well, for his is a winsome, fascinating personality. Certain distinctions set him apart in a class by himself. He is a man of culture—disciplined, refined, mentally and morally well-educated. From his youth up he had "worn the white flower of a blameless life." Moreover, he is a man of substance—"he was very rich." He is a warning for all time to those who are severely tempted to become the pampered slaves instead of the Christlike masters of wealth. When a man's head is cut off by a golden axe, he is every whit as dead as if it had been cut off by a rusty rip-saw; and when a man goes spiritually dead in a palace, if anything he makes a somewhat colder spiritual corpse than he might have made in a prison. But the outstanding characteristic of

the Rich Young Ruler is his morality, which must never, under any circumstances, be depreciated. Morality is beautiful and august, wherever found. The sheer moral weight of Socrates, Marcus Aurelius, and kindred spirits in all ages and climes, is immeasurable.

Wherein does the moralist come short? Having many virtues, what is his one thing yet lacking? Just this: The moralist is the victim of a mechanical code rather than the disciple of a living Master. After keeping the law, he still asks: "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Ah! here is our moralist's trouble, always, everywhere: He is just missing, though only by a hair's breadth, eternal life. No matter what he does, no matter how well he does it, somehow he fails of vital inner satisfaction. "But," you say, "that is the old, old quarrel between law and grace." So it is, and so it will continue. It is in the constitution of things; it is inherent in human nature; it is in the character of God Himself. Morality is the result of a system, life is the gift of a Person. The distinction cannot be too clearly made. Superficial people say there is no difference, that it is just a quibble over words; but men who know—the deep thinkers who are first of all the deep livers—insist that the difference is measureless, that, biologically speaking, it is the difference of the living and the not-living. The finest, strongest Unitarian in history was

spoiled on the Damascus highway. A few years before Paul's re-birth, the moralist spoke out good and strong in the multitude on the shores of Galilee. "What must we do," they asked, "that we may work the works of God?" All your systems of merit, all your codes of morality, all your keepers of Mosaic law, all your disciples of the good and failures of the best since time began—all speak in that question. And all are answered—answered for time and eternity—by the Master: "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." Personal trust in a personal Saviour—this is the first qualification for work, and it begets a passion for doing the works of God which burns deeper and cleaner into that glorious end which ushers in a still more glorious beginning.

Again: This moralist man not only cheats himself out of the life that is life indeed, but he subjects himself to the insidious temptation of toppling over into the abyss of phariseeism. It is a truism that the moral man is the hardest man in the world to convert. Why is this? Simply because he joins the company of those who "trust in themselves that they are righteous." Like Narcissus, he falls in love with himself. Coming to the fountain whose waters shone with silvery clearness, the youth stooped down to drink. And lo! he beheld his own image in the water—a face with wonderful eyes and cheeks, a

neck of ivory, a head flowing with the locks of Apollo. At once he tried to embrace the image, but it fled. Then he wooed it with love-words, but it made no answer. At last Narcissus pined away and died. But when his shade was being ferried over the Stygian river, it leaned over the side of the boat to catch another glimpse of itself in the waters. Here is the fatal weakness of the moralist: He falls into self-idolatry; he is sufficient unto himself; and he pines away even while he gazes admiringly upon the image reflected in his own moral looking-glass. The devil never worries about the man who is good enough. Like a cat with a mouse, he toys with him to his heart's content, and then ruins him. Being often reproved by the best, the moralist is hardened by the better, and ultimately destroyed, and that without remedy. Many an outwardly moral man, living a perfectly proper life in the eyes of men, is inwardly a whited sepulchre and full of all uncleanness. The hidden floors of his being are strewn with burnt-out enthusiasms, shattered ideals, and piled with the wreckage of noble dreams that perished in sinful but outwardly unknown delirium and spiritual suicide.

Plainly, the mere moralist is not the type to conquer in this fathomless universe, with its heavens and hells, its joys and sorrows, its births and deaths. Morality is a noble staff, but it is not strong enough to help us up the steep, white

Alps of God. We must have a Guide who not only knows the way: He must also be the Way. Well, has anybody come down out of those invisible lands? Have the celestial climes sent us any report of their atmosphere, of the kind of people they grow, of the quality of life they have? We ought to be very sure about these things, my friends. Sometimes I pick up the paper and read the weather bulletin: "Fair, warmer to-day; fair to-morrow; moderate south winds." But I look out, and it is not fair; the rain is falling in torrents. Then I read the bulletin again. Sure enough, it is "fair" on paper; but all the same it is very "foul" outside. Then I say: "The weather man must be mistaken." And the weather says so, too. What I want to know is this: Has anybody unmistakenly discovered the climate, the weather of the Soul's Eternal Lands unto us? Do we know how God feels toward lost men and women? Has He spoken so emphatically, so luminously that every one may hear and understand? Is there hope for the lost pharisee and his twin brother, the moralist? Yes, I believe there is—a living hope, a hope that maketh not ashamed, a hope that saves to the uttermost. Heaven has broken into the most heavenly speech: "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

III

Our morning lesson sets forth still another human type; he is unlike either of those mentioned. It is the man with a serious handicap. We see one phase of him in Bartimæus, another in Zacchæus, which is equivalent to saying that our handicaps are different. Going up Schermerhorn Street the other day, I came across two distinct kinds of poetry—poetry in a book and poetry in a human eye. It happened in this way: In a book store I had bought a pocket edition of "Sonnets From the Portuguese"—better "pocket change," by the way, provided you are not going to a summer resort and not in need of an extra maid, than a roll of bank bills! I was taking out my pen-knife, which opens by pressing a spring, to cut the leaves apart. A little Italian lad, hugging a bunch of rhubarb as he leaned against the fence, happened to see the knife blade fly open. Ah, those wonderful eyes of his—they were founts of enchanting beauty, the home of an almost seraphic loveliness! So I let him examine the knife, that I might get another look into his golden brown eyes. I have to plead guilty to cheating the boy in the trade, for what is looking at a carload of steel knives compared to a single glimpse of eyes that an angel might have and be proud of? Turning to read that twenty-sixth sonnet of "Shakespeare's Daughter," I said to

myself: "Here are two kinds of poetry—poetry in words and poetry in eyes." But is it not equally true that men have many kinds of handicaps —some one kind, some another, but all some kind.

Look at these two men of Jericho. Bartimæus is handicapped by physical blindness. His affliction, no doubt, had something to do with making him a beggar. Whatever the cause, the fact is: Bartimæus is a social pariah. But just within the city of Jericho—city of palaces and palms; city that Antony gave to Cleopatra; city that Herod purchased of Cæsar; city of wealth and poverty; city of joy and sorrow—within this city is a man whose handicap is neither blindness nor poverty. Zacchæus was the collector of Jericho's custom house. The centre of the balsam trade, distributing to Egypt and other lands, Jericho's commercial importance is readily understood. And this man Zacchæus "was a chief publican, and he was rich." We may take an oral picture of Zacchæus in four words: He was a "grafter." He belonged to the "ring." He was the duly accredited, justly hated, heartily despised "boss" of Jericho's Tammany Hall. As Bartimæus is the social pariah, Zacchæus is the social parasite. He sucked up the blood of humanity without making any return for his crimson cash.

Here, then, are the two social extremes—the pariah and the parasite. They are as old as history, coextensive with all civilizations, exceed-

ingly familiar in our time. But the thing that makes these distant men seem very near to-day is this: They are handicapped. Many things widely separate them from us. They belonged to another race; they lived twenty centuries ago; their customs, their modes of living, their habits of thought, are vastly different from our own. And yet they seem to call across the gulf of ages and claim us as their brothers. They say: "We have never seen you in the flesh; we have never heard your voices; we have never grasped your hands; yet we claim you for our blood-kin. Therefore, we ignore all conventionalisms, all arbitrary barriers, all that separates the human from the human, and say: 'O men, my brothers, we, too, belonged to earth's army of the crippled, the defeated, the discouraged, the broken-hearted.' Once upon a time, now two thousand springs ago —but in this land where a thousand years are as one day, it seems only day before yesterday— heaven came our way; and I, Bartimæus, lost my blindness in a great flood of light, and I, Zacchæus, washed my hands clean of their stain. We, who are still wondering at the glory into which we have come, send you greeting and good cheer."

But if man's handicaps are many, his Saviour is one; for "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day, yea and unto the ages." Everything was against Bartimæus—environment, affliction,

unsympathetic men; but Christ is on his side, and the blind beggar is crowned victor. Zacchæus was bound by chains even stronger than those that held Bartimæus, but Christ snapped them and gave the little publican his freedom. What is your handicap? Have you said in despair: "There is no hope for me; my case is beyond remedy; I must go limping all my days." And why do you say that? Is it not because you have failed to read God's good news from eternity? All a soul has to do to be saved is to realize its lostness, and then, like Bartimæus, ask for Christ's help. Did He not halt that pilgrim host for this blind man? And He would halt plumed regiments on high, if necessary, to hear your cry. When German diggers recently found a new poem of Sappho in the dust heaps of Oxyrhynchus, an English poetry-lover confessed that he was made to leap out of bed for joy. Think of it —a lyric of Sappho raised from the dust! The marvel is that the Lesbian's buried words did not take root and blossom into singing flowers. Now Paul says: "We are God's poems." Just as Sappho's golden fragments are an expression of her mind, so are we expressions of God's mind. But we are down in the dust, buried in the Oxyrhynchus of flesh, entombed by sinful habits. Alas! we are poems that have lost their rhythm—we do not go singingly. Who can give us back our song? Who can lift us out of the dust heaps and

restore us to our place in the poetry of the universe? Ah, there is but One—no other, now and forevermore—who can accomplish this task. "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

IV

For a final human type we must go to the disciples themselves. It is that lovely scene in which mothers are bringing their babes to Christ. "But when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them." It was not in good taste, they thought, for overweening mothers to interrupt their Master. Clothed with a little brief, mistaken authority, they utterly failed to read our Lord's heart. "But Jesus called them unto Him, saying, Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for to such belongeth the kingdom of God."

Unquestionably, this officious, distrustful, sophisticated man is a well-known figure in our world. He is greatly in need of the Saviour, who saves us unto a perennially fresh and childlike simplicity. Most of us have an amazing skill for missing Christ by going some other way; nevertheless, the universe yields up its finest treasure only to the child-hearted. The New Testament contains no more arresting words than these: "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth,

that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes: yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in Thy sight." With disciplined armies, great captains go forth to conquer nations; with trained minds and perfected instruments, scientists wrest new secrets from nature. But remember, to conquer the kingdom of heaven, we must go weaponed with the simplicity, the humility, the trustfulness of a little child. The late Sylvester Horne, in one of the last addresses he made in this country, used this illustration, which is said to have been his favorite: A little child was making a toy boat. All day he worked very hard, trying to finish the boat before night came. But the boy failed to complete his work and went away to bed with a feeling of disappointment. When his father came home, he saw the unfinished boat and completed it. Next morning when the lad came down and saw his boat all complete, he said: "I guess the angels must have done it while I was sleeping." It takes a little child to lead men into the kingdom of God. We may lose many things and not be essentially poorer, but if we lose the spirit of childlike trustfulness, we are bankrupt indeed. From my study window the other morning, I saw the Aquitania coming into port. Like a great ocean swan, she steamed majestically up the bay. Hundreds of boats announced her arrival with blasts of wel-

come. Watching her, I thought of the ice fields she had crossed; I thought of wind and tempest that howled about her decks; I thought of billows that broke against her prow and fathoms of sea that might have given her a grave in the deep. But no! here she comes now, safe in harbor, a queen of the seas, welcomed home by a chorus of lusty voices. Well, like the boy, we are all building our boat, and it is no toy. It is a strange and awful Ship of Destiny. We are out on the high seas of being. The years come and go so quickly that we shall hardly finish before nightfall. But, after all, finishing is not the important thing, for our little endings may be but larger beginnings. This is the deeply important question for you and for me as we go sailing on: Do we have the Eternal Pilot on board? Can we hear Him say, above wind and wave: "It is I; be not afraid; peace be still?" If so, no matter on what separate coasts we may be cast; no matter what veiling fogs may shut out the stars; no matter how often we may drop anchor and wish for the day; no matter how perilous our journey, in this hour of thoughtful quiet and Christian worship, let me assure you that we shall not fail of the Celestial Harbor. For we have been caught up into the mission of Him who was, and is, and is to come, even the Son of man who came to seek and to save that which was lost.

IV

THE GENIUS OF JOY

"Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice."—PHILIP. iv. 4.

THIS is an extraordinary exhortation. It thrills with spiritual awe. It palpitates with religious daring. The words are heightened and deepened when we consider the circumstances under which they were written. Paul is in jail, having been run in so many times now that he probably no longer kept account of them. Nor was he in a respectable prison, such as we know in modern times. Paul was in the Mamertine prison. It impresses one as being a kind of grave, walled-up with iron and roofed over with woven gloom. And it was from this black pit that the apostle let loose his flock of spiritual larks. A third-rate man might have sat on a green hill summit in June and chanted the praises of joy. But it is nothing less than Pauline to sit amid vermin, darkness, corpses, and the clank of chains and rejoice until the dark quivers with light and the discords melt into diapasons.

In Philippians, as nowhere else, perhaps, Paul celebrates the genius of Christian joy. He is not thinking of light-winged happiness, nor short-lived pleasure, nor bubbling emotion, nor frothy sentiment. He is rather speaking of that which lies far below all raging currents, of that which dwells high above all human storms. The Christian is not to rejoice in himself. If he does, his life will smack of the weary, the stale, the flat, the unprofitable, quickly enough. But let him rejoice in God, and God will always have something fresh, pungent, enriching for him to rejoice in.

I

Joy may be likened unto a spiritual white palace. Its foundations are peace; its doors are hope; its walls are praise; its windows are wrought of luminous vision; its dome shoulders the stars for room. And the soul of man, despite his trouble, his sin, his grief, his pain, somehow feels that this wonderful palace of joy is his true home. No matter what bitter seas of tears he may sail; no matter what deserts of waste he may wander; no matter what continents of worry he may cross, man carries in his breast, ingrained in his very being, the conviction that joy, deep as the ocean, calm as the galaxies, measureless as space, is the true portion of his soul. Why has he missed his spiritual estate? Why is

he a comparative stranger in the only palace that is vast and beautiful and satisfying enough to meet the needs of his manifold nature?

Well, for one thing, an enemy stands guard upon the threshold of the palace of joy. His name is Anxiety. The Master knew him. That is why, in the Sermon on the Mount, and otherwhere, He cautions us against him. Threatening, imposing, usurping, overwhelming, Anxiety stands at the entrance, waving men back from their rightful home. He says: "O, yes, I know this is your true place. It was made for you, and you were made for it. Still, you cannot enter here. My name is Anxiety. I am the creator of the divided mind, the divided soul, the divided purpose. Get you back to your thorn-thicket of worry. Be anxious about your life; about your food and drink; about your raiment. Let these make an abject slave of you. I, Anxiety, doom you to empty days, sleepless nights, broken health, unrealized ideals. Even though the palace of joy belongs to you, I forbid you to enter and possess what is inherently your own."

Paul, also, was familiar with this ancient enemy of humanity. He knew how subtle, how domineering, how relentlessly persistent he is. So, lifting the golden trumpet of God to his lips, he blows this ringing, resonant, melodious blast down the world: "In nothing be anxious. Claim your right to scale the highest peaks of joy. You

are the child of hope, of peace, of destiny. Trouble may bark you and peal you and flail you. Pains of flame may scorch you and singe you and crisp you. Dark prisons may hold you. Wicked men may persecute you. But never fear! Keep your spiritual eyes clean by looking unto God. Keep your soul hopes green by standing under the divine rains; they will leak through roofs of steel and make your heart-flowers to leap and bloom. Shunt Anxiety out of your way. He has no right to stand between you and your palace of joy. Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice."

Now, it is with the actual task of putting anxiety out of the way that our problem begins. And why? Is it not largely because we go about it in the wrong way? Variously do men confront this stubborn, sullen, almost omnipresent enemy.

One man says: "I will simply ignore anxiety. It may be a pretty theme for preachers to discuss. It may be a matter for the weak, the incompetent, the ultra unfit: but as for me, I will have none of it." Such inflated talk is soon lost among the winds where it originated. It fails to reckon with reality. It merely squints at the facts of life; it does not look them in the face. Ignoring real problems is only a false, unmanly way of temporarily putting them off. Like ghosts, they come back to haunt us; and unlike ghosts, they are so genuine, so flesh-and-blood like, that we

can almost touch them. Ignore anxiety! A man might as well jump into the ocean and ignore its depths; or leap from the Woolworth tower and ignore Broadway's stony face; or walk barefoot through February snow and ignore the stinging cold. Sickness, sin, death—these and a score of other things flesh is heir to, do not dodge out of our path for a meretricious "Avaunt!" They are as obstinate as fate; and they must be met with other and nobler weapons than good-natured contempt or top-lofty disdain.

Another says: "I have handed the problem of anxiety over to the achievements and good graces of civilization." Ah, well, civilization, we know, is a wearisomely overworked cure-all. Some one has observed that Eucken is exposing the comedy of culture. But does culture, does civilization, require an exposè? Civilization, without something deeper, richer, to give it tone and character, is like a woman of the street holding forth in a drawing room. She is gaudily dressed, brilliantly painted, sparklingly bejeweled. She smiles, she smirks, she flatters, she glitters. But her heart is stone, her breath is poison, her ways are death. "But," you say, "that comparison is rather unjust to civilization." Is it? Is it not, in fact, somewhat easy on that mysterious, headless, many-lived thing which men call civilization? Of course the values of civilization must not be depreciated. The true values are precious,

and they have been bought with a price. But after making full allowance for all the goods of modern life—and they are many—John Burroughs does not hesitate to say that multitudes find our own the most vulgar, the most brutal, the most cruel era the world has ever known. I think this is overdrawn. For our gains out of and over the past are so many and varied that there is an undoubtedly great general improvement.

On the other hand, there is enough truth in the essayist's statement to fully justify our contention that civilization is utterly inadequate to the needs of two-world men and women. The man who depends upon the contemporary order to solve his problem of anxiety will miserably fail. Our big problems are not economic, nor political, nor social. Behind these is another, the father of them all, lusty children though they be. It is this: The religious problem. How to relate one's self to God, to his own full-orbed nature, to his fellows, and thus become the true servant, the brother, the lifter of all—this is the sun-problem. Around it, and partaking of it, economics, politics, science, and philosophy are so many spinning, revolving satellites. Jumping their orbits, then do human chaos and anarchy reign from thrones blacker than unstreaked midnight. The disadvantage of civilization consists in the fact

that it has to be perpetually civilized, and then it is still inchoate, incomplete.

A third man says: "I will meet the problem of anxiety by the power of my own will." Surely, we have not yet made enough of the possibilities of the power to will. The greatest thing in the universe, and next to God, is that marvelous something named will. Professor Bosanquet, in his Gifford Lectures for 1912, has a penetrating study of "The Miracle of Will." Yet the power to will yourself across the waterless, desert wastes of anxiety will assuredly fail. August and holy as human will is, it has definite limitations. They may be far away; but they are there in the distance somewhere; and sooner or later the last soul of us will come stark up against those delimiting walls. They are so deep we cannot crawl under them; so thick we cannot bore through them; so high we cannot climb over them. Blessed is the man who has learned to say, long before reaching those impassable walls: "Not my will, but Thine, be done."

I have suggested only a few of the ways whereby we shall not succeed in displacing anxiety, the sworn foe of Christian joy. What, then, is the secret of dislodging our enemy? Is there one, and is it available to all? Paul says there is. Let us now look to that.

II

In a word, prayer is the creator of joy. "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." *"By prayer!"* That is, the deepmost, centralmost, topmost reality of life. Primarily, prayer does not mean to ask God for something. That is an essential phase of prayer, certainly, and it is emphasized in this passage. But, fundamentally, prayer is an attitude, a mood, an opening of the sluiceways into the infinite, the heavenly, the eternal. The supreme quality in prayer is this: It gives the soul a thrilling, vivid, glorified consciousness of God. If prayer does not beget in me the sense of God, then what are all its lesser gifts combined? Cities of gold and amethyst may dawn through the heavens and leave behind the sweet, opulent, glowing, God-consciousness, and they are only piles of fluff, freighted with rainbow seeds. But create in the human spirit, as Christian prayer indisputably does, the presence of the personal, besieging, redeeming God, and we become citizens of eternity, in kind if not in degree, as truly as saints who have lived in the homeland for a thousand years. The reality of prayer is such that it takes us to heaven before we go, and brings God to us and us to God, while we are on the way. Do you think that irking,

carping, whining, pining anxiety can withstand the presence of Almighty God? Christ and Paul and saints and martyrs answer, Nay!

The transcendent quality in prayer, then, is this: It introduces us to God. It gives us the Eternal. It slays all opposing theories dead. We turn them into stepping stones on which to mount into the presence of our Father. Science may stare at us; philosophy may ponder; unbelief may jabber like a full-grown idiot. But when God and the soul know each other, when experience authenticates their wedding for time and eternity, all theoretical rivals may becomingly pass to the rear. God is the King of Eternity; the Soul is the Bride of Time; Experience is the Priest whereby these twain become one in spirit and in truth. Henceforth they have changed eyes forever and ever. The Lover of Souls makes each soul in turn the lover of the World-Soul, and all other souls therein.

Failing to give us God, prayer is of secondary worth at best. For self-communion, as some of us know by long practice, becomes exceedingly monotonous. It is a dry and arid exercise indeed, a species of mental twaddle much in vogue to-day, as it was thousands of years ago. Now, so cunning are we in religious hocus-pocus, some call it New Thought and Christian Science, vainly striving to conceal their spiritual nakedness behind a nonsensical array of roaring capi-

tals. But Christian prayer invalidates the methods of modern schemers. It does not minify sin, nor pain, nor sickness, nor anxiety. Taking them into the presence of God in Christ Jesus, it receives pardon, grace, strength, and tranquility born of trust.

When you visit your friend, what do you go for? His fine house, his champagne, his stalled ox? If so, you are not a friend. You are just a mere acquaintance, and that of the baser sort. The truth is, that stalled ox, living or dead, is a little higher in the scale of being than you are. No; you do not visit a friend for his gardens and vineyards and culinary delights alone. Friendship can neither begin nor flourish on any such sordid basis. You visit your friend for himself. You drink of the inmost deeps of his soul. You partake of his very self, his unique and graciously magnetic personality. Your own selves are intersphered, knit in to the tune of ultimate harmonies. That is why you have him forever. There is no distance in genuine friendship. It is spaceless and timeless. Now prayer is the medium whereby we visit God. He is our joyfully unfailing Friend. We are grateful for His things: Hanging gardens blooming with stars; space that offers spirit a field for exercise; faculties that have pushed up through the dirt, and are gradually shaking themselves free of the clinging mire; seasons that symbolize the four

ages of human life—the spring of innocence, the summer of growth, the autumn of maturity, the winter of decay—all hinting that we were so packed with treasure on arriving here that earth and time were too small for us, and we must go on back to God to become immortal grown-ups; shine and dark and song and wing—for these, for all things, we thank God. They suggest His majesty, His beauty, His wisdom, His patience, His power, His love. Yet more than for these wondrous, enchanting, "matter-moulded forms," we bless God for Himself. Having Him, we have all things, and more; having all things without Him, we have less than nothing. The unimpeachable reality of prayer is in the fact that it gives us God. It brings us pulses of nobleness for pangs of shame. It puts us in tune not only with the infinite, which may mean juiceless, lifeless vacuity; prayer puts us in tune with the infinite plus—*GOD*. Therefore, the value of mood, of attitude, of communion, in our prayer-life, is primary, unspeakable, inestimable. Christina Rossetti has nobly expressed this spirit in one of her finest sonnets:

"A host of things I take on trust: I take
The nightingales on trust, for few and far
Between those actual summer moments are
When I have heard what melody they make.
So chanced it once at Como on the Lake:
But all things, then, were musical; each star
Sang on its course, each breeze sang on its car,

All harmonies sang to senses wide-awake.
All things in tune, myself not out of tune,
Those nightingales were nightingales indeed:
Yet truly an owl had satisfied my need,
And wrought a rapture underneath that moon,
Or simple sparrow chirping from a reed;
For June that night glowed like a double June."

Having found the key, there is here another truth of prayer. "And supplication." It is the thought of present supply. It throbs with an humble, holy, commanding immediacy. It implies spiritually purposeful definiteness. A man goes to his banker to borrow money. "How much do you want?" asks the banker. "O, I don't know," says the man. "Well," replies the banker, "you will have to tell me the exact sum." Men cannot transact business unless each understands what the other wants. There must be noon-clear precision. You go to your doctor. "Doctor, I am very sick," you say. "You must help me." "Where are you sick?" the doctor inquires. "Does your head ache? Is your liver, that kingdom of the devil, out of order? Do you sleep well? How's your appetite?" "Indeed," you answer, "I don't know. I'm just sick everywhere in general and nowhere in particular." "Come now," says the doctor, "let's locate one specific disorder. That will help me to understand your trouble as a whole." Definiteness on the patient's part aids the diagnostician. Or maybe you go to your minister in some gnawing

soul pain. You want advice, you need solace. "But you must tell me the nature of your difficulty before I can act intelligently," declares the minister.

Now, these human analogies fall far short when applied to prayer. We do not need to be told that. We know that God is infinitely wiser than bankers, physicians, and ministers. But God is not infinitely foolish, indulgently insane, unaccountably silly. "Horrible! Perish the thought!" you exclaim. Yet do not men literally treat the Almighty as if He were a kind of enthroned incompetence, or a measureless stick of sugar candy to be complacently sucked? Perhaps this unworthy conception of God is responsible for so much spiritual babyhood in the land. No wonder anxiety trips us up, incapacitates us, enslaves us. "In everything," says Paul, "by prayer and supplication" tell God what you want. Nothing is too big, nothing is too small to be saturated in the cleansing, fragrant tides of prayer. Diffidence in prayer is only an apologetic form of mock modesty. "Pray without ceasing," says this man who prayed for everything and everybody. Paul prayed for slaves, for kings, for churches, for friends, for fellow-workers, for people he had never seen, for health, for safe journeys, for ready utterance. Paul's golden humours are traceable to Paul's golden prayers. By prayer he climbed the silver-throned peaks of

reality and saw afar the new universe with its new humanity marching to the sphere-melody of Christ's ever-coming kingdom.

Prayer has spiritual metre, tune, mood, definiteness; but Christian prayer has bud and bloom also. *"With thanksgiving!"* Thanksgiving is just the blossom of fruitful prayer. It is the overflow of grace, heartsome greenness, spiritual quintessence. Lowell said Dryden wrote "prose with a kind of Æolian attachment." Thanksgiving is the Æolian attachment of prayer. A woman said to me: "After I have prayed for something, I always thank my heavenly Father. My friends say I am very foolish. Am I?" "Yes, indeed," I replied, "you are exceedingly foolish, you are divinely foolish. Why," I said—and her dear old eyes were brimful of tears—"you are as deliciously, as magnificently, as wisely foolish as Paul, as Saint Francis, as John Calvin, as Martin Luther, as John Wesley, as Charles Spurgeon, as Henry Ward Beecher. I trust that you may steadfastly grow in the grace of this divine foolishness, and that wisdom may not perish from the earth with the passing of your wise friends." Truly, there is a foolishness that maketh wise as there is a wisdom that maketh idiotic. Thanksgiving, my friend, is that glorious rebound in the soul which assures you that your prayer has gone singing straight home to the heart of God.

III

The final mark of Christian prayer is peace: "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." I once saw a sentinel at the London Tower. It was good to watch that young English soldier upon his beat. Up and down, to and fro, across and around he swung like a faithful servant of his king. There was untold treasure in the Tower; this soldier was on the king's business; and I have the very distinct impression, after many years, that he went about it in a kingly fashion. And "the peace of God," our white sentinel, noiselessly marches before the doors of the prayer-tuned heart. He exhales the sense of the unfathomable—he "passeth all understanding." I like that; it has the feel of eternity. I can understand it somewhat, but not all. Dipping my finger into the East River, I bring up a single drop of water. That drop is water just as truly as all the waters that billow the great deep. Yet it does not exhaust the ocean. God's peace passeth all understanding because it is incontainable, not because it is unintelligible. Moreover, the white sentinel is keen-eyed: "Shall guard your hearts." How thousand-eyed to watch these eager, passionate, hungry, wandering hearts of ours! The white sentinel is also swift-footed: "And your

thoughts." Thoughts are swifter than light. They outrun time and space. They flash everywhither. Thoughts are fire-footed mind-prodigals that need ceaseless surveillance. Furthermore, the white sentinel patrols a limitless sphere: "In Christ Jesus." As if the stars had to be pushed back to make room for the immensity of His movements! *"In Christ Jesus!"* Vaster than the cosmic urge, it is sweeter than dream-bells tinkling on the hills of sleep, softer than flocks of thoughts speeding homeward to Love, dearer than all pure imaginings that wing and catch within the Land of Dreams. "A poet," said Sidney Lanier, "is the mocking-bird of the spiritual universe. In him are collected all the individual songs of all individual natures." And the disciple of Christ is the minstrel of God; his heart is tuned at the source of all melody, all goodness, all joy.

I watched a vessel at the Brooklyn docks. Day after day it rocked in its pocket. There it lay, land-locked, straining at its hawsers, eager to sail. One morning I looked out and it was gone. I pictured it moving out into the river, then into the bay, and, finally, plowing across the Atlantic. Is it not a parable of human life? We are land-locked—spiritually dead; then we move out into the River of God's Pleasures; then we reach the Bay of Longing, thirsting for more; at last we breast the Ocean of Joy, and, "like tides of mu-

sic's golden sea setting toward eternity," we sail on and on—past the Charybdis of Anxiety, past the Scylla of Death, past the Cape of Storms, past the Rocks of Despair, into the Fair Havens of Peace and the Port of Love. And the harmonious winds are laden with the tune of "the white peace," as we go sailing on:

"It lies not on the sunlit hill
Nor on the sunlit plain;
Nor ever yet on any running stream
Nor on the unclouded main.

"But sometimes, through the Soul of Man,
Slow moving o'er his pain,
The moonlight of a perfect peace
Floods heart and brain."

V

A WHOLE CREED

"I am the bread of life. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me may not abide in the darkness."—St. John vi.35, vii.38, xii.46.

OF all the new years that have come and gone, the present is the saddest our world has known. If some being from another planet could visit our earth, behold its untimely graves, look into the blanched faces of men, the tear-stained faces of women, the pinched faces of children, would he not be constrained to say: "Having been through many worlds and seen many kinds of life, I have seen nothing to equal the sorrow and gloom of the earth." Yet in the midst of history's bloodiest war, we are not in despair. This is in itself a miracle of faith and hope. Look about you and consider if there be anything more wonderful than this: Fallen among his own ruins, crushed beneath the weight of desolation he has pulled down upon himself, man still dreams of better times, of higher na-

tional aims, of a coming age of brotherhood, of a warless, emperorless, kingless, kaiserless world. Froude says that in the middle of the nineteenth century "the compasses were all awry, the lights all drifting, and nothing left to steer by except the stars." But inasmuch as the stars are fixed, though compasses do go wrong and lights do drift, the situation is not entirely hopeless. Moreover, we may learn at last that our only hope as a race is to steer by the Star of Bethlehem. And this brings me to the theme suggested by the texts: "A Whole Creed for the New Year."

I

The first article of a whole creed runs: "I believe in the bread of life." Unfortunately, men stop short of the complete statement. For example: Every man believes in bread. Infidel, atheist, agnostic, anarchist, syndicalist, materialist, Christian—we all believe in bread. To be sure, it is not an indication of high mental or spiritual endeavor to have faith in bread. We may hold this much of our creed without any mental sweat, without any volitional exertion whatever. For the blood, no matter what our philosophic or theologic predilections, is an uproarious believer in bread. Bones, tissue, skin, stomach, feet, legs, and arms are all tremendously orthodox in the matter of bread. They do not

ask my opinion upon the subject; I am quietly ignored; but they go right on believing in bread, night and day, year in and year out, until death sends them back into the various chemical states out of which they came.

Now some maintain that belief in bread is enough. We are all related to stocks and stones, brothers of the beasts that perish, not even—as Hugo said he was—the tadpole of an archangel. Thus this bread-enough creed, you see, puts a period, a full stop to everything but dirt. I had inclined to think that Isaiah was a majestic spirit surrounded by matter; that David was a kind of celestial swan, skirting these islands of time with broken wing and singing psalms that might not be altogether tuneless along the coasts of eternity; that John, lying on Christ's bosom, got so close to the heart of eternal life that, when death stood across his path, he simply looked death out of countenance, continuing his enchanting journey of the undying; that Paul, when he yielded his head to the axe, only yielded himself—his deathless, immortal being—to a more perfect vision of that love which Dante thought moves the sun in heaven and all the stars. "But no," replies the man who believes in bread only, "you are just a poor, innocent, deluded mortal, imagining gods when there are none, deifying men who are but higher animals at best."

Still, the bread-man's answer is not overwhelm-

ingly convincing. He offers me only a mutilated, truncated creed. He does not go far enough. He is perfectly right in believing in bread, but he is woefully wrong in refusing to believe in the Bread of Life also. Otherwise, the finest, the deepest, the grandest things in human life are untouched, unexplained. Here is this splendid specimen of physical manhood. He has the stride of a young god. He also thinks, wills, reasons, hopes, loves. "Look at him," exclaims our bread-logician. "All he needs is bread; bread has made him what he is." But what about his reason? Reason has no teeth, eats no bread, pays no dental bills. And yet, in recalling Aristotle, Newton, Kant, Bacon, we never ask what kind of bread they ate. They ate bread, certainly, but they lived by the Bread of Life, they lived by reason. But, as I have just intimated, reason has no teeth, never eats bread, never suffers from indigestion. Moreover, what about his imagination? Imagination has no jaw-bone, no place for teeth. Did Raphael, having eaten all the delicious food in Rome and Florence, and as a direct result thereof, paint "The Transfiguration?" Did Coleridge, after eating much bread, write "Christabel?" Did Francis Thompson wander into a London gin-mill out of London's lonely, shivering streets, swallow a few ounces of bread and beer, and then sing for all time "The Hound of Heaven"? Hardly! Imagination never lies

awake at night on account of toothache. Then, too, what of his emotions? Are the loves, the hopes, the fears, the devotion of man and woman, of parenthood and childhood, the rich, clean, snow-white, inspiring friendships—are all these to be measured, valued, according to the rule of the loaf? If so, the friendship of David and Jonathan is only a jocose conundrum; the Florentine's pure white soul-flame was concocted out of a witch's brew; the love story of the race—with its deathless dreams, its holy sacrifices, its sacred adventures—is an intertwisted puzzle with no hint of an intelligible answer. Finally, how will this crustman explain the imperishable heroism in human nature? Surely, full stomachs cannot altogether account for the mighty achievements of Albert, King of the Belgians, and of Peter, King of the Servians! There are those who think that these two throneless kings are the kingliest souls now battling for the life or death of militarism. Or again: Out there in the deep a vessel is being pounded to pieces by wind and wave. Here on the shore are the old captain and his life-savers. The deep is threatening, with terrible voice, a full toll of all the people on that broken and breaking vessel. "Lads," shouts the old captain, "we must to the rescue!" "But," the lads protest, "no life-boat can live in that sea, captain. The ocean's foaming teeth have certain death in their angry bite. If we go out, we will

never come back." Then, in a voice that the sea-voices and wind-voices must have paused to hear, the captain shouted: *"But we don't have to come back!"* Ah! we have to go; the voice of duty commands us; our love for men compels us; but we don't have to come back; that is a matter to be settled by God and the soul He hath made in His own image! Tell me—is that holy spirit of heroism merely the result of bread, the empty rattle of dry crusts knocking each other into such thrilling and magnificent daring for the sake of others?

No, my friends, we must not permit ourselves to be imposed upon by the crumb-and-crust conception of life. It is too easy, too specious; it asks too much of our reason; it leaves such vast areas of our inner being unaccounted for; it makes it far harder, all things considered, to believe in dirt than it does to believe in divinity. Let us ardently believe in bread—and all the material wonders bread suggests; for our bread-line should be as illimitable as the physical universe. It should hold in its measureless lengths the majesty of all seas, the splendor of all stars, the promise of all Aprils, the wealth of all summers, and the gold of all autumns. But after compassing sod and sky and sea and land and sunset and star—after all fair and sublime and lovely forms have yielded us their beauty, we know that there is something still beyond, be-

hind, within; something better than bread, something fairer than violet meadows of sky, something sweeter than softly silver wind-whisperings at twilight, something that urges us to bow and pray:

"Break Thou the bread of life,
Dear Lord, to me,
As Thou didst break the loaves
Beside the sea;
Beyond the sacred page
I seek Thee, Lord;
My spirit pants for Thee,
O living Word!

"Bless Thou the truth, dear Lord,
To me—to me—
As Thou didst bless the bread
By Galilee;
Then shall all bondage cease,
All fetters fall;
And I shall find my peace,
My All-in-All."

II

The second article of a whole creed reads: "I believe in the water of life." Here, again, everybody is compelled to subscribe to at least a partial creed. Even plants believe in water. Trees and flowers and grass, and all their many-colored neighbors of the soil, are stanch disciples of water. Were it not for their abiding faith in water, there would be no twinkling leaves, no rosebushes, no wheatfields next summer. Nor is

it especially taxing, from the standpoint of thought and observation, for a man to believe in water. Growing boys, of course, may not think much of water when exteriorly applied. But a man knows that three-fourths of the earth's surface is covered by water; he also knows that about two-thirds of his own body is composed of water. Haeckel—that big, blind giant grinding in the mills of modern materialism—is such a fanatical believer in water that he thinks water, and the other elements, have all begotten themselves. He does not ask with Job: "Has the rain a father?" There is nothing material or immaterial, within or without the universe, worthy the name of Father or God. The war proves, according to this biologist, that the thought of an overruling Providence in human affairs is utterly untenable. But does it really prove anything of the sort? When the imagination undertakes to picture the blackened ruins of Belgium and Servia, the millions of new-made graves, the multitudes of the crippled, the sightless, the fatherless, the motherless, the childless, does not this inhuman war rather prove what men are already saying, what history will write in words of flame: "The unspeakable Turk was out-Turked by the unspeakable Hohenzollern!"

Now, in its elementary relations, water stands for at least two things: it is a quencher of thirst and it is a cleanser. And is it not these two

truths, in their spiritual bearing, which yield the Christian a whole rather than a piecemeal creed? Believing in water as heartily, as sincerely, as jubilantly as the most arrogant materialist, Christ's men and women believe in the Water of Life also. And why?

First, because it alone quenches the thirst of the soul. "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God." Man's thirst for God is deep and permanent. Like the thirsts of the body, this highest and supreme thirst is pervertible; nevertheless, it burns on after the thirsts of the body have burned out. We must believe this, if we believe in soul at all, or else give up, as Tennyson said, the mighty hopes which make us men. Here is the dew-pearled, morning wonder in humanity's checkered, sultry day: The living God begets in undying souls a parching thirst for Himself! None other can satisfy that thirst. Does not man thirst for fame, and find it a bursting bubble? Does not man thirst for glory, and do not "paths of glory lead but to the grave?" Does not man thirst for power, and is not unsanctified power one of the blackest curses our earth knows? Does not man thirst for gold, and does not gold, divested of its godlike uses, create only a golden hell? But lo! man thirsts for God, and the universe bares its inmost heart, pouring nourishing streams of life into his God-thirsty nature! For

God alone is the infallible cure of that deadly, emaciating disease which Professor James brilliantly defined as "the sick soul, the divided self," and which Paul apostolically and bluntly named "sin, that it might appear sin, working death."

But if our thirst is deep, the divine supply is superabundant. "If any man thirst," cried the Opener of Eternal Fountains, "let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water." What a heart-thrilling, soul-cheering promise! "O, thirsty soul, come unto Me and drink. You may try everything else and your thirst will be unslaked. Left alone, you are a human desert—dry, infertile, flowerless, treeless, songless; but you may be a garden of the Lord, through which silver waters flow, wherein heavenly songsters sing, and green, fragrant things flourish through all seasons and all weathers. The secret depths of your consciousness shall be as fresh as the streams of an invisible spring. Nay, that is not all. Freshened and vitalized in the hidden mysteries of your own being, you shall become as the headwaters of benediction to others. Your inner brook shall break into flowing rivers and your flowing rivers shall widen into spiritual seas of living water!"

The second use of water is in its cleansing power. Imagine a world like ours with no water to cleanse it for a single day! Yet would such a

physical condition be more appalling than souls without recourse to the spiritual tides of cleansing that flow unceasingly out from the heart of God in Christ? The saint, and not the sinner, the soul hid with Christ in God, and not the soul dead in trespasses and sins, is alone competent to answer our question. For it is one of the moral paradoxes that the whitest, cleanest, gentlest, heavenliest spirits have ever been most keenly sensitive to the terrors and horrors of sin. The quasi-Christian, the easy-going, dulcet-toned essayist and hair-splitting speculator—what cares he for the purifying fountains, opened for sin and uncleanness? He is not deep enough to comprehend his own shallowness. He walks out upon his intellectual ice as if he were crossing a rill of speculation instead of a fathomless sea of reality. Never until he breaks through his thin ice, and is sucked down into the swirling, befouling depths of sin's stifling nastiness, can he know what it is to be washed in Calvary's whitening streams of forgiving love. I am emphasizing a fact in human experience. Let the philosophers, the scientists, the psychologists make the most of it. It is the big, towering, mountain-souled men and women, and not the smug, clever little coteries dwelling among the foothills of history, who require the forgiveness of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. A typical case is that of Doctor Carmen, the Edin-

burgh physician. After finishing some church business with Doctor Alexander Whyte, senior pastor of Free Saint George's, Edinburgh, the physician looked earnestly, almost beseechingly, at the minister as he said: "Now, ha'e ye any word for an old sinner?" The question took the great preacher's breath away, for he thought the questioner was an old saint—and he was! Rising and stretching forth a strong hand to the strong hand ready to clasp it, Doctor Whyte said: "He delighteth in mercy." Then the physician escaped out of the room. Next morning the minister received this letter from the physician: "Dear friend, I will never doubt Him again—the sins of my youth. I was near the gates of hell, but that word of God comforted me, and I will never doubt Him again. If the devil casts up my sin in my teeth, I will say: 'Yes, it is all true, and you cannot tell the half of it, but I have to do with One who delighteth in mercy.'" "I can show you the paper," says Doctor Whyte, "it sanctifies my desk."

Ah, yes! these are the lives that sanctify history, that glorify God, that enrich heaven. Seeing God in everything, they are not foolish enough to say that everything is God. They look over the brightness of the stars to the whiteness of the throne, before which they pray:

"God of the scarlet rose,
Give me the beauty that Thy love bestows!

"God of the lily's cup,
Fill me! I hold this empty chalice up!

"God of the sea-gull's wing,
Bear me above each dark and turbulent thing!

"God of the eagle's nest,
Oh, let me make my eyrie near Thy breast!

"God of the roadside weed,
Grant I may humbly serve the humblest need!

"God of the butterfly,
Help me to vanquish death, although I die!"

III

The final article of a whole creed is this: "I believe in the light of life." Of all the figures our Lord used, light is perhaps the most universal, the most capable of symbolizing Himself. Of course there could be no physical life in the world without the sun. All the kingdoms—mineral, vegetable, animal, human—owe their being to the center of the solar system.

Inasmuch as Christ said, "I am the light of the world," we may go down the winding ways of the new year saying: "Yes, I believe in light—the sweet, silent, strong energy that stirs and quickens every plant and tree and animal and human in the wide world; but I believe, also, in the Light behind the light—I believe in the Light of Life." We do not need to say that our human

life is full of darkness. Every one is more or less aware of that. What we want to know is this: Is there a light that can shiver through the densest darkness? Indeed there is, and you may test the matter for yourself. Reichel was conducting the final rehearsal of his great choir for the production of the "Messiah." The chorus had sung through to the point where the soprano solo takes up the refrain, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." The soloist's technique was perfect—she had faultless breathing, accurate note placing, flawless enunciation. But after the final note, all eyes were fixed upon Reichel to catch his look of approval. Instead he silenced the orchestra, walked up to the singer with sorrowful eyes and said: "My daughter, you do not really know that your Redeemer liveth, do you?" "Why, yes," she answered, flushing, "I think I do." "Then sing it," cried Reichel. "Tell it to me so I and all who hear you will know, and know that you know the joy and power of it." Then he motioned the orchestra to play it again. And this time she sang the truth as she knew it in her own heart, sang it as she experienced it in her own soul, sang it with no thought of applause, sang it so gloriously that all who heard forgot the craftsman's work and wept under the spell of the singer's soul. Again the old master approached her, not with sorrowful eyes, but with joyous, tear-filled eyes, kissed her on the forehead, and said:

"You do know, for you have told me." Our Master wants us to speak and live a like certitude. After all, no other assurance is worth much to us; but this personal assurance, which we may have in our own consciousness, is of infinite worth and peace. For Christ's light flashes illuminatingly down into the nethermost caves of human darkness and makes them glow and sparkle like mines of jewels. "I am come a light into the world"—He who was before the sun, gave the sun its first faint gleams of fire, started the sun on its career of brilliance—He it is who says: "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me may not abide in the darkness." Who knows the darkness of this darkened universe like Christ? Yet He was unafraid, undiscouraged in the midst of apparent defeat. And He imparts His calm fearlessness to all who trust Him. "While ye have the light," He says, "believe on the light, that ye may become sons of the light." Privilege and appropriation—but is that all? No, there is a greater wonder still. Seizing and appropriating the light, we become sons of the light. In other words, the light does immeasurably more for us than we can possibly do for it. Does a man need to be told the sun is shining when he walks down the street on a golden day in June? Is he not a radiant son of the physical light? Christ, as Sir Oliver Lodge says, is the sunshine of life, and He witnesses to His

own brightness in the heart. Just this, I take it, is Christianity. All the rest is theology and philosophy. And they are good, very good; only they are not good enough to take you conquering-ly through this new year. Only Christ is sufficient for that. You may have many hard questions; but Christ can answer them all. Believe in bread, but believe, also, in the Bread of Life. Believe in water, but believe, also, in the Water of Life. Believe in light, but believe, also, in the Light of Life. It is a whole creed, and it will create whole men and women.

VI

THE ULTIMATE RICHES

"And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold."
—GEN. xiii. 2.

THIS is one of those Scripture passages which mean not only what they say, but a great deal more than they say. After Jean Paul had listened to Goethe read his own poetry, he said: "It is like deep-toned thunder blended with whispering rain-drops." Lovers of literature find enduring charm in the writings of the great German; but what must it have meant, as in the case of Richter, to have heard Goethe interpret his own thoughts! The man Goethe lends them a rarer beauty, a larger suggestiveness. He means more than his words say. So of this text; it is worthful because of what it does not say, just because it suggests more than can be packed into its few words. Let us read it again: "And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold." Does it not bring us face about with a kind of mental jerk, a sort of dislocation of the spiritual joints and marrows? Candidly, in all your thinking of Abram, have you ever once

thought of him as being rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold? Did you ever hear a sermon dwelling upon the fact that Abram was rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold? Did you ever read a book —and the Father of the Faithful has inspired many volumes—treating the particular viewpoint that Abram was rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold? That he was thus rich there is no room for doubt. In the twenty-fourth chapter of Genesis, which, for sheer literary beauty and vivid romance, is unique in all literature, the servant of Abram refers to his master's wealth. And yet our text brings us hard up against the paradox that we never think of Abram as rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold! Well, then, how do we think of him? Why, we habitually associate him with the ultimate riches, as a dispenser of abiding wealth, as a distributor of eternal goods. It is this phase of his character that I wish to study with you.

I

To begin at the beginning, we must reckon with Abram's godliness. "There builded he an altar unto the Lord!" This man had great business with a great God, not little business with a little, universe-enmeshed Creator! Proving his own soul, he proved, also, that quality of soul which shines with increasing radiance: for godliness, some one has said, is the splendor of char-

acter which gives the shine of omnipotence to actions. Is not Abram an illustration of that divine character-splendor which invests man with a kind of human omnipotence? After thousands of years, towering over the wrecks of empires and the dust of fleeting generations, this man works on and on, unwearying, unhasting, unresting, a vital character functioning in the supreme reaches of personality. A godly man, did we but read the universe with illuminated eyes, gloriously outlasts the huge and intricate web of physical forces of which his body is a part. "Know," said an old psalmist and thinker bright with the morning glow of eternity, "that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for Himself." In other words, nature may grow dim with age, finally exhausting its forces of renewal; but human nature, transfigured, exalted, set on high at God's right hand forevermore, grows agelessly younger, timelessly fairer, because it is constantly going toward its everlasting spring-time. Disraeli once said to a discouraged Hebrew: "You belong to a race that can do everything else but fail." A high tribute to a great people, it strikes the undying note in the melody of godliness. *A godly man simply cannot fail!* He is unwithering because he lives upon the shore of heaven's silver rivers. He is unconquerable because he is leagued in with ultimate realities, backed by forces whose reserve powers are infinite. At last he storms

and takes every trench his enemies may build. And then, from the victory side, he shouts with God's trumpeter of old: "For by Thee I have run through a troop; by my God have I leaped over a wall!"

But this is not only true of Abram, my friends. It is the godly man, and he alone, who offers any clue to the tangled mazes of history. Go back into the great epochs—eras blazing with fire whose flames are unquenched and unquenchable—and what makes them great? Godly men! Men whose hearts God had touched are the men who walked with surest stride in the world's darkest days. Why, after sixteen centuries, do we still call Chrysostom the golden-mouthed? "Because he was so marvelously eloquent," you reply. And that is true; he was eloquent, wondrous eloquent! But eloquence that keeps step with the centuries does not walk by fine phrases. The dust of the road soon settles thick and grave-like upon that gaudy pilgrim named the rhetorician. But John Chrysostom's mouth of gold, like October the month of gold, is still goldenly fruitful. What is the secret? Here it is: "There"—in the cave, in the mart, in the court—"builded he an altar unto the Lord!" Godliness is the sap that gives perennial springtime to Chrysostom's eloquence. Towering above the mists of that fourth century is another familiar figure. At times it seemed as if Athanasius had no friend

but God and death. Small of stature, and a diseased stature at that, this man looms above pope, emperor, king, and queen. To-day we may not be greatly interested in his theological debates. Indeed, they are and were of secondary importance; they never reveal the hidings of his power. The primary thing to remember about Athanasius is this: He was a man of godliness all compact! The fires of controversy may destroy his disputes; they leave untouched the fire-proof foundations of his greatness. And so it was, and so it is, and so it will ever be of Time's valiant Greathearts, who close old epochs and usher in new ones. Your Savonarolas, your Calvins, your Knoxes, your Wesleys—after the dirt has been removed, deep down below all errors and all endowments, there shines in all and through all the gleaming gold of godliness! Like Abram, they *may* be rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold; but like Abram, also, they *must* be rich in godliness, they *must* build a definite altar to a very definite God, else they are poverty-stricken waifs of Time, whirled hither and thither by the merciless winds of fate and chance!

Now, I fancy this is the very truth we men of to-day need to recover. Our age has been obsessed in building altars to Efficiency. We have spelled it with a capital and told ourselves that it was bringing in the millennium by leaps and bounds. But we are learning afresh, what all

history emphasizes, that efficiency apart from goodness, is a death's-head; it is now stalking across all Europe; in destroying itself, as it is and must, it threatens to destroy everything within its fire-girt zone. But one thing is not going to be destroyed, and that one thing will come out of this bloody rain with terrible power. It is this: For a long, long time to come, the better part of the world is going to carry a change of heart as to the real value of godless efficiency devoid of godly character! We know, as never before, that cleverness may be a synonym for cruelty; that the highest civilization, so-called, may be an exceedingly thin skin covering the blackest barbarism; that science, raised to its highest power, may be the perverted apostle of savagery; that philosophy, run to the seed of materialism, now croaking in the tones of Schopenhauer, now raving in the insanity of Nietzsche, now roaring in the propaganda of Bernhardi, may be the full-fledged raven of pessimism and super-brutality; that war, the blackest curse issuing from the throat of the bottomless pit, may be forsooth proclaimed as a good thing, a heroic tonic that peoples must needs spasmodically take to tone up their depleted nerves! What! Isn't there already enough savagery and want and woe and sin in the world? Did men keep right on for generations, not pausing to slay and pillage and destroy, would it not take every ounce of all the

mental and physical energy they possess, to make this world what God in Christ asks them to help Him make it? But no! This hydra-headed beast named Efficiency, says that war is good, that men and nations require it! If this, in the light of Christ and human experience, is the true philosophy of life, then the sooner we all go to perdition the better it will be for this part of God's moral universe!

Ah! my friend, godliness is the big, live issue for you and me. One morning two men were walking along a city street. Both looked like gentlemen, and one was a gentleman. Now it happened that they met a woman, who was a maid, a household servant. On approaching her, the gentleman lifted his hat as he spoke a cheery "Good morning!" Whereupon the other, who looked like a gentleman, sneered, taunting his friend with: "Has it come to this, that you doff your hat to a servant?" The gentleman replied quietly, but emphatically: "I did not lift my hat to the floor-scrubber, nor to the sweeper, nor to the window-washer, but to the *woman* in her, to the *God* who made her!" Frankly, I do not know the man's creed, but this much I know: There, on the street, in the roar of the great city, he built an altar unto God and sacrificed most acceptably upon it! Two men were saying goodbye. One remarked: "I don't see as much of you as I'd like to. But I think of you; I am in-

terested in you and your work; and I pray for you constantly." With moistened eyes, the other answered: "Whatever you do, don't forget to ring the sky-bells for me!" How many are safe Home at last, how many are facing Home now, how many will be facing Home in the ages to be, just because some faithful soul has kept ringing "the sky-bells" that call mortals up the ever-greening slopes to God's dear summerlands!

"I stand in the great forever,
I lave in the ocean of truth,
And I bask in the golden sunshine
Of endless love and youth.
And God is within and around me,
All good is forever mine,
To all who seek it is given,
And it comes by a law divine.
Thus I stand in the great forever
With Thee as eternities roll;
Thy Spirit forsakes me never,
Thy love is the home of my soul."

II

Rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold, Abram was also rich in unselfishness. Thrilling indeed is that scene in which Abram and Lot part company. Modern, too, as very ancient, is the cause thereof. These two men were compelled to face the perils of prosperity. It is not an easy task, this of wisely handling one's property! "And the land was not able to bear them, that they

might dwell together; for their substance was great." After constant misunderstanding and strife between their herdsmen, Lot evidently demanded "a place in the sun." What would have worked the undoing of a lesser soul, Abram turned into a splendid opportunity "to try his soul's strength on, educe the man." What nobility Abram manifests, what magnanimity, what brotherliness! "And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between thee and me, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me; if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." Lot, quite untouched by his uncle's altruism, chose the plain of Jordan, which was well watered and as fair as the garden of the Lord. But fair gardens do not necessarily make fair souls, else the cities of the plain and the Sodomites could never have been! Yet the old chronicle depicts this situation: Lot shows himself utterly selfish, while Abram manifests a spirit of beautiful unselfishness.

Let us insist, once again, this is not a story of old times only; it is a fresh morning edition of our new times, of which you and I are the makers. Selfishness and unselfishness—the two poles of our human world! In Barrie's little book, "Half Hours," it is hard to name the finest of the four

plays it contains. Some may care most for "Pantaloon," or "Rosalind," or "The Twelve-Pound Look." My preference is for the last one, called "The Will." The first scene shows a young London married couple in the law offices of Devizes & Son. The husband has come to have his will drawn up. They are not a penny in debt, have £200 saved, he, Philip Ross, receives £170 salary, and, moreover, he is insured for £500. Even the thought of making a will causes the young wife to weep. But, inasmuch as Philip insists on the instrument, leaving everything to her, she tearfully consents. Only—dear unselfish soul!—she insists on others being remembered, too! She has two cousins, ladies, not well off, who must be left £100. There is the convalescent home, also, that must come in for at least £10. Altogether it is a picturesquely romantic couple, making the elder Devizes feel quite gay! The second scene is the same office, the same couple, twenty years later. The same—but oh! how changed! Philip Ross, money magnate, calls to make another will. He finds his wife, Emily, uninvited, but waiting in the office, "just to see that he does nothing foolish." Swollen with vulgar prosperity, after the lapse of twenty years, the couple present an unforgettable picture. Philip is worth "an easy seventy thou."—he likes to roll the phrase over his tongue! His wife, not so much gowned as upholstered, has grown coarse

and vulgar, too. Moreover, she insists on having this new will drawn absolutely in favor of herself, not just a life interest. She opposes all legacies—the hospitals must be cut off, and even those indigent cousins must not be loaded with so much money! The third scene shows Sir Philip Ross—he has been knighted—nearly sixty now, in mourning, carrying "the broken pieces of his life with an air of braggadocio." He has come to make a third will. The wife is dead, the son is "a rotter," the daughter has eloped with her chauffeur. Consequently, he does not know what to do with his money. Allowing all his hoarded gold to run through his fingers, he exclaims: "The money I have won with my blood. God in heaven!" At last, taking a paper from his pocket, he says to the lawyer: "Here, take this. It has the names and addresses of the half-dozen men I've fought with most for gold! and I've beaten them. Draw up a will, leaving all my money to be divided between them, with my respectful curses, and bring it to my house and I'll sign it." Oh, the stinging irony of it! Oh, the terrible justice of it! It is a twentieth century tragedy of ingrown selfishness. To this young couple, Mr. and Mrs. Philip Ross, life was as fair as a garden of the Lord; avarice—"a spot no bigger than a pin's head"—unconsciously spread and destroyed them, body and soul!

That is an exposition of human nature at its

worst by one of our living masters. Let us turn, now, to an exhibition of human nature at its best. This summer I was in a home, the life-story of whose husband and father makes brave reading. The earliest ambition of this man was to be a minister of the Gospel. Just as God put the longing into the soul of Mozart to be a musician, of Andrea del Sarto to be a painter, of Edison to be an inventor, so He put the passion into this boy's heart to be a preacher, but poverty, that strange blighter and blesser of human life, made it impossible for him to procure an education. Working with his hands to make odds and ends meet, his youthful years slipped by and still no educational advantages came. At last he married, built a little home, settled down to a life of manual labor, and he is still toiling on. But the dream of being a minister, though never realized, never left him. In due time three boys came into that home. They are big men now, strong, stalwart fellows, and all of them are—*preachers!* Talk about miracles! Talk about heroism! Talk about fidelity! Talk about dreams coming true! Talk about aspirations being fulfilled! They are all here—wondrous, heart-shattering, magnificent—in the life of this obscure Pennsylvanian, of whom his country has a right to be proud! For sixty years he has said to the Lots of the world, with unspoken but living eloquence: "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between thee and me;

for we be brethren. Life's golden lands lie before us. Take your choice! If you go to the left, I will go to the right; if you go to the right, I will go to the left. But whatever you do, take your choice!" Like Abram, he has kept his tryst with God in star-glow and noonday heat. He is not rich in cattle, nor silver, nor gold, but he is one of God's unheralded millionaires, a magnate in the ultimate riches! Hearing of a life such as this, and there are many such, is not one quickened unto diviner things? Does he not feel that it is gloriously worth while not only to be a pilgrim of earth, but a pilgrim of the infinite? Is he not in a mood for saying once again those lines of Ulysses, which first convinced Carlyle that Tennyson was a great poet:

"Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world!
Push off, and sitting well in order, smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield!"

III

We consider, finally, Abram's riches of influence. God's promise to the patriarch was threefold: First, God would make him a great nation; second, God would make him a great name; third, God would make him a great blessing. The last, it seems to me, is supreme. To so live and work that one may be a blessing to his kind—that far surpasses national and personal greatness, as commonly understood. For thus we do not merely join the choir invisible—we are heartsome music-makers here and now, in the thick of things, in the noise and dust of the world's drab everydayness. And does not this bring us face to face with the most compelling, the most romantic, the most moving thought of our human life? *Your life is knit in with every human life that was, or is, or shall be!* We may not like it. Yet it is awful, bidding us to greatly tremble; it is sublime, bidding us to greatly live! If two prayers are a perfect strength, as Rossetti thought, then this truth should be a perfect inspiration for making our lives count, positively, dynamically, on the side of goodness. Wonderful is this story, often told by astronomers, of the light of stars, dead ages ago, still shining upon our planet! More wonderful still is the steady stream of influence pouring into our lives from the dead of vanished epochs! In our basilar

moods, we cannot live in this fine air; but when we have risen above our low-flying hours, visiting the bracing hill country of the spirit on wings of faith and hope and love, we know that this is God's very truth. We are inviolably federated in with all souls, held in the strong clasp of the God of the living, who can never be the God of the dead, because all live unto Him. Once, in Emerson's presence, a man spoke of the statements contained in the Declaration of Independence as "glittering generalities." "Glittering generalities," exclaimed Emerson, "they are blazing ubiquities!" And the riches of godliness, the riches of unselfishness, the riches of influence are among "the blazing ubiquities" with which we have to do every day, every hour, every second. We may kill them, bury them out of sight, but on the third day they will rise again and come back to us, unharmed, clean, and deathless! They will not down! We must either rise with them, or go down ourselves, scorched to the quick by their burning splendor. As I came out of a man's home, he called me aside from the company and whispered me in the ear: "Is there anything I can do for you?" Very simple—and very grand! It reveals the habit of a long life, it declares the practice of a greatly gracious soul, seeking to do good, because he is good, and yet withal as modest as a violet! Oh! I call you to-day to invest more largely in the bonds which represent the

ultimate riches! So use your cattle, your silver, and your gold that you may become very rich, also, in Christliness!

"Common as the wayside grasses,
Ordinary as the soil,
By the score he daily passes,
Going to and from his toil.
Stranger he to wealth and fame—
He is only What's-His-Name.

"Cheerful 'neath the load he's bearing,
For he always bears a load;
Patiently forever faring
On his ordinary road;
All his days are much the same—
Uncomplaining What's-His-Name.

"Not for him is glittering glory,
Not for him the places high;
Week by week the same old story—
Try and fail and fail and try.
Life for him is dull and tame—
Poor, old, plodding What's-His-Name.

"Though to someone else the guerdon,
Though but few his worth may know;
On his shoulders rests the burden
Of our progress won so slow.
Red the road by which we came
With the blood of What's-His-Name."

VII

THE HEAVENLY HUMAN*

"Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect."—St. Matt. v. 48.

EVERY great teacher has at least two marks of distinction. Other qualities he may have, but these two he must have. First, he must give a great ideal. He must lift before the scholar a goal which will challenge the best effort the scholar can put forth. For a low-flying ideal cannot produce a high-souled scholar. Second, a great teacher must impress his pupil that he has the power to help him realize the ideal held up before him. There must be something in the teacher's personality—a compelling magnetism, a wise graciousness, a stimulating urgency—that steadily draws the scholar onward. Now these two marks of the great teacher are supreme in Jesus. Reading the Sermon on the Mount, men in every age have exclaimed: "How impossible it all is in a world like this!" We are like the lad. "Where are you going?" I

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asked. With nothing even faintly resembling a smile, he said: "I'm going to that hateful old music lesson." "Good!" I said. "After awhile you will be a musician." By this time, the mingled scowl and frown upon the lad's face had united in one large, disgusting protest: "Oh, shucks!" Thus generation after generation protests against the impossibleness of Christ's idealism. But just as certainly as the lad will one day wake up to the fact that he can sing and play, so will our dull, protesting humanity understand, soon or late, that our Master has not only given us a great ideal, but that He also has the power to enable us to realize that ideal. So my theme is, "The Heavenly Human." Let us approach it, as the Master does, through a consideration of the Heavenly Father.

I

Man's greatest thought is his thought of God. Who is this Being besetting us behind and before? What is the nature of the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity even as he dwells in atom or star? Right thoughts about God are essential; they are the food which nourish the soul unto purity, beauty, and strength. This being true, who or what is our final authority about God? Is it not Jesus and His teaching? To ask the question is equivalent to giving it an

affirmative answer. Only Christ's thoughts of God can stand in the court of illuminated reason and morality. I heard a publicist discourse upon the theme, "The Influence of Democracy Upon the Idea of God." It was a stimulating address upon a false proposition. For before democracy could exert any influence upon man's conception of God, democracy itself had to be created. Jesus is the one universal democrat; democracy was born at His birth, gained its foothold in the world through His life and teaching, and is conquering mankind by His Spirit. To speak, therefore, of the influence of democracy upon the idea of God is just about as logical as to hold a rose in your hand and ask: "O lovely flower, did you create the sun, or did the sun create you?"

What, then, are Christ's thoughts of God? What are some of the perfections of the Heavenly Father? Broadly speaking, there are two groups of ideas concerning God. First of all, there is what we may call the outer group. Here we breathe an atmosphere that is metaphysical, philosophic, theologic. We say that God is omnipotent, having all power; that God is omnipresent, being everywhere in His universe; that God is omniscient, being all-knowing and all-wise. And these ideas, both as ideas and as expressive of truth, are not to be disregarded. They must mean something, they must represent something very grand, else they never could have gained

such permanent standing room in the human mind. They may not appeal with equal force to all minds and hearts, but may this not be due, in large part, to the peculiar mental or spiritual bent of individuals? Many minds wide open to certain phases of reality are just as locked and barred to other phases. This is but to say that the poetic mind, the philosophic mind, the scientific mind, the theologic mind, stands for something distinctive in the vast realm of mind. Neither is exhaustive, but neither is untrue. Thus, in this outer group of ideas concerning God, there is abundant room for the purely speculative, the highly imaginative, and the profoundly philosophic.

But there is an inner group of ideas about God. They are found mainly in the New Testament; they are emphatically the creation of Christ; He alone has imported them into the modern consciousness, making them current coin in the ethical and spiritual marts of humanity. We are learning to think of God in the terms of Jesus. I would rather know what Jesus thinks of God, and how to make His thought effective in my own spiritual consciousness, than to know everything else my mind is capable of knowing. What, then, is the Master's first and supreme thought of God? Just this: God is the Heavenly Father. "My Father" is on His tongue as a lad

in the temple; "Your Father" is the constant refrain of His sphere-music to the disciples; "Father" is the one quieting, healing word amid the darkness and hatred of Calvary. Always, everywhere, Jesus makes His appeal to the "Father," —not to king, nor kaiser, nor potentate, nor monarch. Secondly, Jesus thinks of God as the Universal Servant. Persecuted by the Jews because he had healed the Bethesda impotent on the Sabbath day, Jesus said: "My Father worketh even until now, and I work." We might paraphrase His words in this way: "My Father is the untiring worker. He is so busy serving the universe that He cannot pause to keep your narrow Jewish sabbath. You have turned the day of rest into a day of slavery. My Father made the sun rise this morning; He makes the lilies grow; He makes the stars shine; the falling sparrow is a signal for His regard; He moans by the bed of the sick; He is pumping tides of health through men and Nature; He yearns over the prodigal; He cheers the infirm; He heartens the discouraged. My Father is constantly working, with matter and with spirit, and so I work." Thirdly, Jesus thinks of God as the Absolute Goodness. "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." The uses which the evil and the good make of God's sun are very different; the spirit in which the just and the unjust receive God's rain

is by no means the same; but the source from which all blessings flow is one—the absolute goodness of God. There is finally—to mention only one more of Jesus' ideas of God—the divine forgiveness. Men may and do vary in their virtues and endowments; they are tremendously alike in their sins, and, consequently, in their need of pardon. To those who repent, who are sorry for their wrong-doing, and sorry enough to quit it, and are willing to forgive even as they pray to be forgiven—to them, and to them alone, God is abundant in forgiveness.

Now, it is just at this point that confusion arises in the minds of many people. "Is a Christian," they ask, "ever justified in resisting wrong and injustice? Does not the Master command forgiveness even to seventy times seven?" These, and other kindred questions, seriously perplex and disturb large numbers of people. Is there any real, rather than an artificial reconciliation, of such apparently antagonistic problems? I believe there is. But it may be found only in a whole, not in a piece-meal, mutilated exposition of Scripture. Take the Master's own example. He rarely—indeed did He ever?—resent a personal insult or a personal injury. Now Jesus was a profoundly sensitive because a finely wrought soul. Yet He nobly endured pharisaic deviltry and priestly malignancy. But when the forces of wrong were arrayed against the forces

of right; when the helpless and weak were oppressed by the coarse and brutal; when the vulgar rich despoiled the humble poor; in a word, when the rights and privileges of others were wantonly trampled in the dust, I say unto you that Jesus the Christ pronounced the most terrible invective, the most withering condemnation, the most awful malediction, that language has ever expressed. Compared to Christ's, the most scathing denunciations of Æschylus, of Danté, of Shakespeare are as flickering torches to Vesuvius in full flame. This same law applies to you and to me. If you are wronged, if I am wronged—even deeply and terribly wronged—and our forgiveness is truly sought, it is our Christian duty to forgive. But—but—this does not mean that when enfeebled, starving people are ground beneath the brutes who

> "Fill with injustice lands
> And stain with blood the sea,"

you and I are to stand idly, supinely, unprotestingly by while Huns practice the kultur of fiends upon crazed women, decrepit men, and famished children. If I am incapable of indignation at such outrages, let me not smugly flatter myself that I have the Spirit of Christ. Rather do I have the spirit of compromise with injustice, of cowardice in the presence of the vilest barbarism, of expediency when life itself should be gladly

sacrificed rather than be lived in a world where such outlawry is possible.

II

If, then, we know something of the Heavenly Father's perfections, may we not go on to consider some of the ways in which the heavenly human is realized? "Ye therefore shall be perfect, even as your Heavenly Father is perfect." How is that which is limitlessly true of God to become true of me in a necessarily limited sense?

First of all, by being filled with the spirit of divine love and manifesting it in my life. "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy." Why, anybody can do that. It requires no fineness of soul, no heavenliness of disposition, no attitude that is anywise different from the common, ordinary attitude of the average man or woman. Why should I be told to love my neighbours? They are kind, gracious, obliging. Would I not be a kind of monster not to love such people? Again: Why should I be told to hate my enemies? Ordinarily gifted folk do that to perfection. Indeed, otherwise dull and stupid people display a cunning, a cleverness in this regard that would entitle them to one or more degrees in a first-class college of hate.

Now Christ turns this whole subject upside

down, inside out, and sets it right. He expects us to do the unexpected, and in doing the unexpected to realize the unearthly temper and disposition. God expects this extraordinary achievement of us because He knows we are capable of it, because He trusts us with an immeasurable trust. Talk about man's faith in God! Sit down and seriously consider God's faith in man, in you, and you will never again be the same person. The divine trust of the human, notwithstanding the human's century-old disappointment of the divine, is one of the most heartbreaking, as well as one of the most heartening things, in the history of humanity.

Furthermore, this finer, higher, godlike achievement is the only thing that can satisfy man himself. Sodden as we are, it is the unusual goodness, the unique humaneness, the unselfish heroism, that men adore. Plato thought that God held the soul inseverably attached to Himself by its root. The way in which the human responds to the divine in the human certifies the truth of the philosopher's thought. It is said that Helen Keller receives $1,000 an hour for lecturing. Now I maintain that anybody can command $1,000 an hour for talking, *if*—anybody is willing to pay the price for becoming so eloquent. First, get yourself completely walled up in a tomb of flesh—no eye-gate, no ear-gate, no tongue-gate. Second, dig yourself out, toiling

on and on with an almost superhuman patience, forcing your imprisoning walls to yield. Third, after you have come out of your fleshly tomb, just tell people what a wonderful world is theirs in language as pure and sweet as a bird's song; see the unutterable romance of life at your feet, in the air, in the galaxies, in the human beings daily nudging you; see these things, tell men and women about these things, *after* you have broken out of your deaf, dumb, and blind prison of flesh. I tell you people will be so eager, so hungry for your message, that they will gladly pay $66.66 2-3 per minute to hear you talk. Anything that resembles, however imperfectly, the great dear heart of God, is the thing that finally commands the surrender and worship of the human.

A second way in which the heavenly human is realized is by expressing the spirit of divine service. "I am among you as he that serveth," said the holiest expositor of Godhead man can ever know. The most deeply obligated being in all the universe is—who? Why God, our Heavenly Father, of course. And how does He meet His infinite obligations? In some form of serving—always, everlastingly serving His worlds and the beings within them. I killed a mosquito—one of those belated visitors from New Jersey—in my study the other day. I think I did my duty; so far, at any rate, not the slightest compunction

of conscience has overtaken me. But no sooner had I taken the life of that despised insect than the thought flashed into my mind: "What have I done? I have destroyed a creature—just one tiny creature out of millions—that all the scientists, all the philosophers, all the inventors, all the great captains, all the founders of civilization who ever lived, could not restore." "How absurd!" you say. Yes—and how divine, how utterly beyond anything the human can do. What I am trying to say is this: The flower, the worm, the animal, the human, the angel, each and all have their specific interests and rights in God—in Whom they live and move and have their being—and God is so unimaginably great and good that He finds His life by losing it in the service of His universe.

Here, then, is the open, but too often unfrequented path, to human joy and human greatness. "Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He came forth from God, and goeth unto God, riseth from supper, and layeth aside His garments; and He took a towel, and girded Himself." We say this is a striking example of the divine condescension, and it is. But it is more—it is an example of the divine passion for serving which God Himself could not ignore and be God. In view of such truth, why then do we make a big noise when we see a king or queen doing personal service? It is

because we have not permitted Christ's idea and example of greatness to lay hold of us. We are largely pagan still, and much of our vaunted civilization is only veneered paganism. Instead of making a fuss about a queen becoming a Red Cross nurse, why should we not rather exclaim: "Has she awakened at last to a sense of what real queenliness is?" If the King of kings measures His own greatness by His power to do service, then the heavenly human is possible only through the exhibition of a like spirit. For then indeed—

> "A servant with this clause
> Makes drudgery divine;
> Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws
> Makes that and the action fine."

Moreover, by incarnating the spirit of forgiveness, we expose our natures to the greatness which is divine. "I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you." "Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven." It is by forgiving that we enable God to make His forgiveness effective in us. Otherwise, we tie God's hands in this crucial matter. Let us remember this: However black our account against somebody else, God's account against us is blacker still. This whole question does not greatly flatter human nature; but it is not designed to flatter human nature: it is designed to save and

develop human nature. No matter how bitterly any one hates me, I must not hate him in return. If I do I am simply toppling my own soul down in spiritual ruins. But this is only the negative side of forgiveness; and a negative anything is almost a negative nothing. What I must have is the positively forgiving spirit. That, and that alone, under the sweet pressure of God's grace, opens large spaces in my nature for the essentially creative. Men are agreed that forgiveness is one of the noblest deeds of which human nature is capable. Witness that wounded Scotch Highlander. He was seen stroking a German helmet, as he lay in a London hospital. "I suppose you killed your man?" asked the nurse. "No, indeed," he answered. "It was like this: He lay on the field badly wounded and bleeding, and I was in the same condition. I crawled to him and bound up his wounds; he did the same for me. I knew no German and he knew no English; so I thanked him by just smiling. He thanked me by smiling back. By way of a token I handed him my cap, while he handed me his helmet. Then lying side by side we suffered together in silence till we were picked up by the ambulance squad. No, I didn't kill any man." The spirit of Christlike forgiveness is more commanding, more subduing, than even the most extraordinary heroism.

The final thing in the making of the heavenly

human is the spirit of divine trustfulness. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" This is one of the deepest, tenderest appeals our Lord ever made to the children of men. It touches one of the fatal weaknesses of our lives. We trust men day by day, we trust each other with an almost blind, idolatrous trust, and that despite our acknowledged shortcomings. "That is just where we fail," a man of large business interests remarked to me. "Those two partners of mine—how I trust them, and how they trust me! But how far short we come of really trusting our Father." Yet trustfulness is the secret by which we tap the divine energies. It makes the great God available to the frailest human. I watched a woman pulling up dead flower stalks. The flowers had all gone—well, where had they gone, anyway? Where do flowers go when they die? They must go to some fragrant, bloomy heaven beyond the reach of autumn's cruelly golden sickle. And so she pulled up the withered, dead stalks and laid them in a pile. Then I saw her hand reach for a bulb, then another, and another still. She put those ugly bulbs in the ground, and went away. But that woman is not losing any sleep over the homely, fuzzy things. She knows that just as sure as April comes singing up the world next

spring, those bulbs will be out in a mass of bloom to steal the thrilling April-kisses. Turning away, I whispered to myself: "If a woman will trust the dirt for her miracle of bloom, I will trust God to put His eternal bloom in my soul." Why not? For my text is not simply vibrant with present, spontaneous power; it is one of God's long, deep, vernal prophecies to the soul. "Ye therefore *shall be* perfect"—not to-day, nor to-morrow, inasmuch as the greatest things require the longest time—but sometime, in His own good time, the Heavenly Father shall fill the heavenly human unutterably full of His completing reality, truth, and love.

"O little bulb, uncouth,
Ragged and rusty brown,
Have you some dew of youth?
Have you a crimson gown?
Plant me and see
What I shall be,—
God's fine surprise
Before your eyes!

"O fuzzy ugliness,
Poor, helpless, crawling worm,
Can any loveliness
Be in that sluggish form?
Hide me and see
What I shall be,—
God's bright surprise
Before your eyes!

"A body wearing out,
A crumbling house of clay!
O agony of doubt,
And darkness and dismay!
Trust God and see
What I shall be,—
His *best* surprise
Before your eyes!"

VIII

LIFE'S LAST THIRTY MINUTES

"What is your life?"—St. James iv. 14.

STUDENTS are more or less familiar with Canon Liddon's celebrated sermon on "The First Five Minutes After Death." A man had traveled extensively, visiting the most interesting places of earth. "But," said he, after recounting these unusual scenes, "I expect to see greater wonders by far than anything my eyes have yet beheld." Asked to explain, he said: "I mean the things that I shall see the first five minutes after death." That, as I recall it, is the basis of Liddon's striking sermon.

My own discourse is based upon a dream. It emphasizes some lessons—ever old but ever new—concerning the value of life *before death.* Let me confess at once that I am not a very stanch believer in dreams. Like most people, I quickly forget my dreams. But this particular dream I could not forget, nor shall I ever forget it. It was too vivid, too wonderful, too beautiful, too full of truth, too deeply impressed upon my soul to fade entirely away.

My dream was this: I thought that I had but thirty minutes to live. It was in the late afternoon. It was all very tender and impressively solemn, of course, but I was not afraid to die. For entirely aside from my faith and hope in Christ, I believe that death is a phase of life, that death is simply life functioning in ways we do not now fully understand. This being the philosophy of my waking hours, it is not strange that it should color somewhat my dream. But having only thirty minutes to live, the exceeding value of time, the beauty of the world, the wonder of human beings, the greatness and privilege of praying, the joy of service, the preciousness of the Bible, suddenly dawned upon me. I saw them all as I had never seen them before, and they were immeasurably great. So I began at once to figure how I could make the most of life's last thirty minutes. Thus if the text, with its setting, emphasizes the brevity of life, my dream emphasized life's extraordinary value.

I

First of all—and perhaps the most vivid of all—was the tremendous value time assumed in my dream. Having but thirty minutes to live, how was I to make the most of them? That was my problem. It was keen, pressing, startling. I never seemed so pungently alive in all my being

as I did in those lightning-like fractions of a second, considering how I could best invest my golden half hour. I do not recall any desire to go back and live life over again. Life has ever been so good to me that I have come to trust life completely. I believe that the good is a token of the better; I believe that the better is a major prophet of the best. Moreover, no matter how excellent things are, I firmly believe, with Browning, that the best is yet to be. Entertaining, therefore, no hopeless regrets over an admittedly imperfect past, my dream made me startlingly aware of the sheer worth of time. I said: "Now I know at last that Time is just a suburb of Eternity. I have always regarded their relations as exceedingly intimate, but now I see clearly that Time is the mysterious stuff of which Eternity is." Something like that, though I have expressed it crudely enough, flashed through my dreamful thoughts. I was dimly aware of the meaning of Henry Vaughan's memorable lines beginning: "I saw Eternity the other night."

And the things I could crowd into thirty minutes! Why, I seemed activity incarnate. Long errands were made with the rapidity of light. I thought I had already reached the happy era foretold by one of our modern seers. He thinks the time will come when man will literally travel by the power of thought; that is, man will be

capable of willing himself to a distant part of the universe just as expeditiously as he is now able to think of some world far off in space. Perhaps this is advanced thinking with a vengeance, and just about as thin and tenuous as most dreams.

Now the dazzling activity of which I seemed to be conscious was doubtless nothing more than one of the countless tricks dreams play upon the dreamer. But that feeling of the inestimable value of time—that, I am sure, was no dream-trick. For when everything else is torn away, time is the soul's essential capital. Nothing great can be achieved without time; nothing base can be done without the abuse of time. The difference in men is very largely the difference in their use of time. Yesterday two young men came to this city. To-day one is seeking the underworld; the other is seeking the upperworld. Glance hurriedly down the river of years. Where will the two men be? One will be wrecked upon the desolate island of despair; but the other will not be a piece of human driftwood; he will command the current; he will compel it to bear him past all the Harbors of Becoming into the City of Being. "Commonplace!" you exclaim. That depends. If you have reached the period when your chief business in life is to kill time; if you are endeavoring to get through this world in as slovenly a fashion as possible; if you are determined to take the risk—perilous beyond all

perils—of turning up in the other world diminishingly smaller than before your venture into this, I grant you that time may be both valueless and commonplace—in your sight. But if you are not dead to the rapture of the Christlike, the eternal, the poetic, the heroic, the sublime, you will esteem time so highly as to allow no day or hour to pass without incorporating something of Heaven's goodness into the sum total of your being. Here is a piece of more suggestive reading than anything to be seen in the lost and found columns of your daily paper: "LOST: Somewhere between sunrise and sunset, two Golden Hours, each set with Sixty Diamond Minutes. No reward is offered, for they are gone forever."

A wise man declared that five minutes of today were worth as much to him as five minutes in the next millenium. And that was my own feeling during life's last thirty minutes. Some years ago astronomers of England and France undertook a seemingly insuperable task. One-sixteenth of a second was missing, and these savants set about to find it. Nobody knew what had become of it. But between the sun's time as recorded at Greenwich and as understood in Paris, there was that small discrepancy. To find that one-sixteenth of a second great expense was incurred. In Paris a special building was constructed, expensive instruments were installed,

mathematical experts were engaged. "And what was all this nonsense about?" Well, there wasn't any nonsense about it; it would not have reported itself to the most efficient microscope. These men were engaged in a serious task; and why? Because longitude is calculated on the basis of Greenwich time. Determining as it does the boundaries of many lands, even the slightest variation in longitude may change the nationality of thousands of people. But in a far truer sense, do not these noiseless fragments of time—the days, the hours, the minutes, the seconds—determine the spiritual boundaries of human lives? Life's last thirty minutes gave me a new valuation of time. Time is the opportunity God offers man to begin the true unfolding of his total self.

II

A second thing that came out in my dream was a quickened sense of the beauty of the world. There is the sky, I thought. It is about sunset time. I will spend at least five of my precious thirty minutes looking at the sky, the grass, the water, the trees, the birds, and the flowers. These things had always been more or less attractive to me. But now they were unutterably beautiful. I have since thought of Ruskin's words: "It is a law of this universe that the best things

are seldomest seen in their best form." Happily, I had fallen upon one of those rare times. Everything was to be seen in its fairest form. I am not sure whether it was something else or April, which, as John Masefield says, "was quick in Nature like a green flame." But of this I am confident: Everything appeared to be enfolded in the spirit-white garment of heavenly beauty. Every blade of grass was trying to break into articulate speech; every little pool had caught the breath of the wind and its surface was laughing in wimpling waves of joy; every birdsong was a trifle sweeter than I had ever known before.

But why should it require a dream, all astir with the consciousness of only a few minutes more of life, to impress one with the wonderful beauty of our earth? This is a question, surely, for our waking hours. Even loveliness of form and color are continuously beckoning to us through every season and from every quarter. But neither shapeliness nor hue exhaust the beauty of material things. Indeed, they scarcely more than scratch their surface. The deeper beauty of coördination, purpose, thought, underlies all outward forms. "See deep enough," wrote Carlyle, "and you will see musically; the heart of Nature being everywhere music, if you can only reach it." Therefore, why not hear a sky-tune now and then? Or why not pause to listen to a symphony in color? These may re-

quire a profoundly melodious ear, but they will yield lingering, haunting, celestial harmonies. How did this gravel come to be? Ask the geologist, and he will recite a chapter replete with interest. How does the moon—"a soul within the brain of the great sleeping world"—sway the tides? Ask Sir George Darwin, and he will hold you spellbound—if you are a good listener! How does the dust make the sky not only possible but enrapturing? Ask Alfred Russel Wallace or J. Arthur Thomson, and they will give you a new vision of the grandeur of dust.

But the beauty of the organic world surpasses the beauty of the inorganic, even as living things are more fascinating than dead things. Will you hearken to this bit of barnyard homespun? You know that farmers' wives sometimes require a hen to hatch a set of ducklings. From the first the hen seems to go about as if she were being coerced into performing an un-henlike service. Yet, because the mothering instinct is strong within her, she undertakes her task in true mothering fashion. But the day soon comes when the hen is thrown into a tempest of worry and excitement by those pesky ducklings. Once their muscular powers have unfolded, they forthwith forsake their hen-mother for the first water in sight. She is all cluttered up—a frenzy in feathers—lest her unnatural offspring be drowned. Question: Who told the ducklings that they

could swim? They never consulted a gymnasium professor? How did that intangible chart and compass get into their duckling brains? "Instinct," you retort. But whence comes this astonishingly adaptive and harmonizing power? Yet the organic world is fairly alive with it. As is well known, the mother turtle deposits her eggs in a hole in the sand. Does she then proceed to personally assist in the hatching of her young? Not a bit of it! She is too modern, too scientific to think of such a thing! She has a mysterious understanding with the sun, whose warmth brings the young turtles into the world. And then is witnessed one of the most beautiful adjustments in Nature. As soon as the young turtle escapes from the shell and breaks through the covering of sand wrought by its mother, it makes a bee-line for the sea. In less than an hour's notice, it dashes into the water like a veteran and swims about like an expert. Who taught the mother turtle how to appropriate the sun-energy in hatching her young? Who showed the little turtle the way to the wooing waves? Are not these facts—and Nature is so full of them that scientists have not yet been able to record them all—conclusive of the beauty, not only of form and color, but of the higher beauty of plan, purpose, and goal everywhere evident in the universe? "He hath made everything beautiful in His time." Then why should one wait until life's

last thirty minutes to abnormally discover the beauty of the world? The Master said a sparrow was important enough to challenge the thoughtful care of God. Therefore, when any man finds a speck of dust in this universe which does not bear the footprint of the Almighty, he shall be rewarded for his pains by proving himself to be a very large and perfectly developed fool!

III

A third use I decided to make of my last thirty minutes was this: Doing some things which I might have done, but which had been left undone. I have read of an eminent saint who, when asked what he would do if he knew that he had only a few hours of life, replied that he would do very much as he did every day. Conspicuous for godliness, his was one of the "prayed up" and "served up" lives. He was a kind of human contemporary of God. As already hinted, I had no such feeling. I was uneasily conscious of the sins of omission. Unusual acts, I remember, did not enter into the account at all. They were the unwritten and unsung things of daily life. I wanted to speak a word of encouragement to the discouraged. I wanted to whisper something consoling into the ear of the heartbroken. I wanted to draw a little closer to the forsaken. I wanted to help carry the load of the overbur-

dened. But that was not all. I wished to spend at least two of those five minutes devoted to service in just being happy, in entering into the happiness of others—into the innocence of the innocent, into the joy of the joy-bringers. I thought that a smile far outclassed a frown and that a note of praise far outweighed a growl. "Just let me do these inconsequential but immortal things," I pleaded. They bulked larger than anything else—the heroic, the renowned, the unique—in history.

Now more than once, during my waking hours, I have had to confess, though my own, that was a most sensible dream. For, in the Final Assize, the Master more than hints that the so-called inconspicuous things of life will be seen to have been the illustrious things. The imagination may be the wondersmith in the house of dreams; but even the imagination is impotent to picture the greatness of our lowliest service for God and man. Such service seems to be taken up finally into the original and unimpairable constitution of the universe. At the roll-call of the nations, we shall see God's side of simple things. But why should we not begin to perceive that now? For this divine side of simple things—what is it? Ultimately, it resolves itself into the golden service through the little and greatly golden deeds that make life everlastingly august. Do I feed the hungry? Yes—and illimitably,

more. I minister to the God in the hungry. Do I give a cup of cold water to a thirsty mortal? That may be seemingly commonplace; but when I am told that a thirsty mortal enshrines the Eternal God in disguise, the commonplace becomes glorious. Offering hospitality to a stranger—sheltering him from cold or wind or rain or heat—is a humane and beautiful act; but when I am assured that the stranger is a moving tabernacle indwelt by Deity, the humanity and beauty of the deed merge into something akin to worship. Do I clothe the naked? Yes; but so much more that tongue can never rehearse it all. For while God wears matter and space as a garment, needing nothing that poor human beings might give, at the same time God goes about shivering and naked, waiting to be clothed in the person of His needy child. Do I go to the prison? But the walls that shut the prisoner in are powerless to shut God out. Is it a small thing, then, to visit God? Yet this is the kind of service that shames the prowess of the mighty, that humbles the tawdriness of the haughty, that upsets the calculations of the worldly wise. It gives large sections of history an absolute reversal. It shows that reputation is a big noise which goes glimmering down the winds of Eternity, while Christlike character mounts nearer and ever nearer the bosom of God, which is the food of the worlds. I am increasingly glad that

my dream showed me the divine side of simple things.

IV

The wonder, the mystery of human beings—that was the fourth thing in my dream. I said: "I must have five of these minutes just to gaze into human faces." "Very well," said my dream-guide, "you shall see multitudes upon multitudes of human beings." And I did. The procession was made up of all classes—rich and poor, young and old, wise and ignorant, saints and sinners, kings, queens, poets, painters, philosophers, preachers, merchants, teachers, lawyers, farmers, builders, journalists, street-sweepers, newsboys, and a great host of little children. Everybody seemed to be suddenly before my vision. But I did not consider them with reference to their callings or positions. A king was no more interesting than a hod-carrier; nor was a hod-carrier more interesting than a king. The philosopher and the newsboy occupied the same level, but it was a very high and lofty level. Stripped of the trappings of circumstance, there they stood, each and all, majestic, awe-inspiring, fleshly bundles of infinity. And what was most impressive, they accepted as a matter of course the absence of the various marks of distinction so common in our world. For example, I asked a poet to read me one of his poems. He answered: "You have mis-

taken my calling, friend. I am not a poet; I am a human being." Then I asked a newsboy: "What's the news?" He replied: "I'm not a newsboy; I don't sell newspapers. I'm a human being, too." Evidently, he had overheard the poet's answer. I asked a certain king: "How did you lose your throne?" "Throne?" he questioned. "I never occupied a throne; I am a human being, fearfully and wonderfully made." I could not help feeling, deep down in the misty realms of the subconscious, that perhaps he felt ashamed of his former calling. Next I approached a little girl. Spring's freshest tint and autumn's deepest flame glowed in her cheeks. "Where did you come from, angel dear?"—I ventured to change a single word in George MacDonald's fragrant lines entitled, "Baby."—Half rebukingly she fixed her sky-blue eyes upon me and said: "I am no angel; I am a human being." And so it went; everybody was insistently proud of being human. I remember of putting to myself the question: "Well, has the time come at last when men, women, and children are willing to take themselves at God's estimate—of such unspeakable worth and wonder as to beggar description and stagger thought?"

Again making due allowance for the tricks dreams play upon us, I still think there is more than a modicum of truth in the attitude of my vision-folk. A critic has said that one of the

reasons why Browning's poetry sometimes seems so pedantic is simply because he never realized how ignorant most of us really are. Be this as it may, our ignorance of the greatness of human beings is appalling. Theoretically, we are wise enough and alert enough here; but essentially and practically most of us have never sensed the infinite value, not merely of humanity as a whole, but humanity as represented in a single, solitary individual. And yet this is a subject that our Lord and Saviour—the central and final authority of the universe—mightily stressed and livingly vindicated. He was bold enough—and eternal enough—to set a human life over against the whole world, the advantages being incalculably on the side of the human. More than one of His parables indicate that so long as a single member of society fails to line up on the side of goodness, there is unceasing travail in the heart of God. Nor must we allow the villainy, the wickedness, the horrible sins in men and the world, to obscure this truth. I sometimes think that human nature is so devilishly mean that the devil himself is more than satisfied with the devilishness of his own masterpieces. But what I think, what any man thinks, matters little; what the everlasting God, who fainteth not neither is weary—what He thinks, matters much.

V

And now twenty of my last thirty minutes had gone! Ten minutes more to live—before beginning to live forever! I will not dwell upon the awesome feeling that possessed me—not a feeling of unmingled terror, but of awful and unspeakable seriousness. I wanted to read for five of my ten minutes. "You shall have any book you wish," said my obliging monitor. Quicker than thought, he passed the old manuscripts and folios of ancient and modern libraries before me. Babylon, Alexandria, Athens, Rome, London, Berlin, and New York—all were represented. "But I can't read those old manuscripts," I said. "Very well," said my accommodating servant. Then like a flash, he served up the classics, ancient and modern. What paper, what bindings, what printing, what colors! But I waved them all aside. They seemed distastefully out of place. And I must have indicated my displeasure; for the dream-valet said: "Are you not rather hard to please, sir?" "Not when I can get what I want," I said, still very much of a human full of the old Adam. "Bring me that Little Book there on the table." He brought it. It was very plain on the outside, but the inside was all golden and lustrous. I was somewhat surprised that my Bible—for the Little Book was that—opened of itself in two places. One was at the Twenty-

third Psalm, the other was at the Fourteenth of St. John. I began reading them aloud—these heavenly masterpieces. As I read, the great libraries and the magnificently printed and glowingly bound volumes all strangely disappeared.

And now there were just five minutes more! But that feeling of terrible solemnity had already passed into an experience of unutterable joy. Had the Little Book triumphed again? I am sure it had; for I was not so much in tune with the infinite as I was in soul-deep communion with God. I saw the everlasting miracle and power of prayer. It seemed the mightiest, subtlest force in the universe, passing through matter and space with inconceivable velocity and irresistible momentum. It went straight to its mark—the Heart of God. Some of the answers were instantaneous, some were ages and ages in being answered, but all were answered. And then——

I woke up!

But not as I went to sleep. Now, when the question of St. James comes to me, "What is your life?" I answer: "It is very brief, like the vanishing vapor; but it is very grand, very sacred, and of infinite value, because it is the good gift of a good God."

IX

MOODS OF LIFE

"And they were saying among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the tomb?"—St. Mark xvi. 3.

TO reach anything like an adequate appreciation of our Lord's resurrection, we should try to view it from the divine standpoint as well as the human. There is abundant evidence that immeasurable forces are active in this event. The ordinary measurements of life fail us here, the philosophic and scientific canons of interpretation cannot give us all the light we require, being necessarily limited in their scope. And yet here are facts confronting us as relentless as the operations of gravity. What are we to do with these facts? To ignore them would be to place a premium upon feeble-mindedness; to deny them would be to insult the spirit of open-minded, scientific inquiry. Facts are facts, whether they be cobblestones or the spirits of just men made perfect. They are each and all a part of the same system of reality. But because a man knows something about cobble-

stones, wood, steel, and stars does not argue that he knows *everything* about life and spirit and invisible powers. Therefore, if he be a wise man, he will say, on the threshold of Joseph's tomb: "What if the events that occurred here, so unnatural to me, are perfectly natural to a God of all power and wisdom and love? Who am I to say that Christ's resurrection is either impossible or unnatural? It is unquestionably beyond the ordinary range of human experience; but what right have I, or any other mortal, to say that ordinary human experience exhausts the possibilities of the Infinite God? As for me, I will wait and ponder and pray." This, surely, is a becoming human attitude, when confronted by a fact so august, so certified, so consoling, and so inspiriting as the Lord Christ's conquest of the grave. It is the fact that gave birth to those mighty moods of life which dominated the first disciples; it is the fact that will continue to create like moods in the disciples of to-day and to-morrow.

I

The first mood we see reflected in these dawn-women is that of perplexity. Staggered by the tragic events of Good Friday, broken by their weight of personal grief, they seek the place where their dead Master was at rest. And as they journey to the grave, they ask this question

among themselves: "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the tomb?" Their love was pure and strong, but oh! how weak, how frail was their woman's strength! A huge mass of stone, an unresponsive block of lifeless matter, lay between the touch of their ministering hands and the Saviour's marred body. "We have spices for the anointing; we have hearts aglow with love and veneration; but the stone—the cold, heartless, terrible stone—who shall roll that away from the door of the tomb?"

Thus they went their several ways in a mood of gloom, of mystery, of misgiving. But this is not an isolated company, not a historic group merely, not just a little band of three lonely souls facing a grave in the garden of death. They are typical, symbolic, prophetic of a great multitude no man can number. Do we not walk toward our own tombs with mighty interrogations leaping from our lips? We are all fleshly encyclopedias bulging with unanswered questions. This is no reflection upon God, the universe, or ourselves. It is just the condition of being, the price we have to pay for becoming richly human. The fact that we bristle with questions is a tribute to our moral worth. That stone at the tomb's door asked no question. It could not say: "Who will roll me out of the way of these women? I am not enough alive to care whether I am a stone or a star." Dead things frame no questions, nor

do dead minds, buried beneath unspiritualized clods of flesh and blood. Socrates hoped that in that world to which the hemlock sent him, they would not put a man to death for asking questions. Oh, believe me, there is no wrong in asking honest questions, my friends; the wrong is to ask them, dogmatically assert that there is no answer to them, and then settle ignominously down to an existence of lazy, irreligious compromise.

These women, then, walked toward that tomb in a mood of tremendous perplexity. All serious souls face their tombs in a like temper. These are a few of the questions they ask: First, what is death? What is this living stillness upon the face of the newly dead? A little while before somebody came to those eye-windows and looked out; now the windows are shut, the blinds are drawn, nobody lives there any more. Who and what is this subtle householder quietly ejecting his tenant? As long as human beings enter the world through the door of birth and leave it through the gate of death, men will ask, What *is* death? Second, what is life? This is the foremost question of the ages. If I could tell you what life is, I think I could tell you what death is. For, in the light of the theophany of God in Christ, as well as in what man has achieved in deciphering the universe, we have come to this conviction: That death, no matter how strange

and mysterious, no matter how brilliant or somber his dress, is the servant of life. On the surface, death seems to outwit, to out-maneuver life. But it is only in the seeming. In reality life goes to death's utmost margin, life accompanies death to the last line of his own defenses, and there, where death seems to have won, life delivers the stroke which proves that death is but the blind, unconscious servant of life. Therefore, this is the message we hear from the topmost peaks of being on Easter morning: "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die." Third, how are the dead raised up? It is one of the two questions asked in the Christian community of ancient Corinth. But it is also one of the century-old questions. There are no dead, according to the Master. Only ignorance of the Scriptures and of the power of God causes such a Sadducaic dilemma. God is the God of the living, not of the dead, and all live unto Him. It is the denial of this truth that makes possible the doctrines of psychopannychism, the underworld, and other crude, un-Christian theories. Fourth, with what body do they come? The question is both natural and reasonable. Men know little or nothing of life except in organization. It is through the organism that life tangibly signals to us. Consequently, many refuse to think of unor-

ganized life at all. It reveals a distinctly insular mental state, to be sure, but not an altogether unnatural one. It is somewhat like the child who, in going from Brooklyn to Manhattan in the subway, stoutly refused to admit that we were under the East river, because he could not see the water. And our world has many of these childishly intellectual subway pilgrims. The astonishing thing is that, in some respects, they are exceedingly brilliant men.

Now this mood of perplexity, more or less familiar to all of us, need not be overwhelming, casting us into the abyss of despair. True, we face great problems, but we also face great solutions. Our Father in Heaven not only works omnipotently, but He works unceasingly. The universe is not the home of an infinite sleeper; it is the sphere of the Unslumbering Toiler, who neither wearies nor nods. Open-eyed souls cannot question the handsomeness of his products, or the wisdom of His ways. Take, for example, the matter of nourishing animal life—the billion and a half human beings on the planet, together with the teeming millions of the lower kingdoms. How are all these humans and animals fed? Well, it is a problem of chemistry. Now no generation has made so much of chemistry as our own. We speak of the miracles of chemistry, of what French, German, British, and American chemists have done. But the supreme chemists

of the world are not of these; the plants are the truly amazing chemists of the earth. They are the super-scientific workers in the vast laboratory of organic nature, commissioned of God to provide food for all living creatures. And where do these plant-chemists get their supplies? Very largely out of the four elements of carbon, hydrogen, ammonia, and water. Primarily, our bread and meat and drink, our blood, our breath, our whole physical being is absolutely dependent, and perpetually dependent, upon the plants. If they were not, we could not possibly be, physically speaking. If the plants ever adopt the modern habit of going on strike, at least three things will happen to us. First, we will all get lean; second, we will all continue to get leaner; third, we will all get so bloodlessly lean that the grave will not be moved at our coming, because even the grave will not know that it has an occupant after we shall have arrived. The operations of Nature are God's unceasing miracles; and the fact that we moderns have contracted the rather pompous habit of calling them laws, does not lessen their wonder and mystery in the least. So, if we are confronted by perplexing questions, we are beset before and behind by consoling answers. If there is mystery in the spiritual, there is mystery in the physical, too, and wonder in all—wonder, which Aristotle held to be the beginning of knowledge. The physical is the shadow cast by

the spiritual; and the spiritual is God's forth-flashing splendor of intelligence and love.

II

The second Easter mood is wonder. "Looking up, they see;" looking down, their vision was of the color of the ground, of the earth earthy. But now the mood of wonder is born—born out of their failure to find what they expected to find around and within the tomb. Three things they were confident of finding—first, a great stone at the tomb's entrance; second, a dead Christ; third, the pall and gloom of death. And they counted upon finding these three things because, when Christ died on Good Friday, neither they nor a single human being on the earth believed that He would rise from the dead. Thus a dead faith invariably goes in quest of a dead Christ; and a living Christ cannot report Himself to a dead faith; therefore, He creates, as it were, the faith by which He is seen. Oh, no, there was no obstructing stone, no victorious death, no unlit gloom at Christ's grave.

In the light, then, of what they found, what may we hope to find at death? For the Christian, the tomb has a message of great good cheer. First, it proclaims that death is a thoroughfare, a gate, a door, a means of passing out, a method of heavenly entrance. "And looking up, they see

that the stone is rolled back; for it was exceedingly great." They see that lifeless matter is the tool of deathless spirit. They expected an impenetrable wall; they found a magnificent aperture. They imagined bleak limitation; they found immeasurable expanse. They pictured a clod; they found a God—a God who had already gone before them, rolling exceeding great material impediments out of their way. Naturalists remind us that when Nature contrived the swallow, she laughed at form, sacrificing everything to the idea of flight. In repose, the swallow is a homely bird; in flight, she is the perfection of grace. To multiply this bird's strength, Nature refused to give her a neck, and granted her only an apology for feet. For the swallow is all wing. She feeds on the wing, she drinks on the wing, she bathes on the wing, she feeds her young on the wing. And like the swallow, the soul of man is made for flight—for flight headlong into the Infinite Summerlands. Man has heard the call of the Eternal—he goes in answer. Man has scented the sweetness of celestial gardens—he goes in quest. Man has visioned Lands dressed in undecaying green—he goes to prove both his soul and his dream. God has smitten man through with the passion of immortal yearning, wrought him a wide-winged creature of time and eternity, and made him to fly so high above the tomb, that

death has to strain his ear to catch man's golden notes of triumph!

In the light of our Lord's tomb, we may learn a second truth concerning our own: The tomb is the birthplace of unaging youth. "And entering into the tomb, they saw a young man." Just as if one of the golden lads living up among the Eternal Hills had come down into an earthly grave and said: "I am a specimen of the citizens of the Invisible Lifeland. The oldest of our folks are the youngest. Down here in your world you make much of wrinkles and gray hairs and halting steps. It is human to keep them at bay as long as possible. But, remember, white hairs and feeble knees pause at the grave. Youth is contagious in our Country. I never saw an old person There. The first old man that left the earth and entered Heaven has been growing youthfully younger all these ages. Even the oldest angels are the youngest. I myself was one of the choristers that sang at the laying of the cornerstone of the worlds. And yet, do I not look young? Indeed, I am so young that you will go away and tell the listening centuries that, though you expected to find death and decay in God's tomb, you saw instead a young man. Ah! we all thrill with perfect youth, born of wisdom and experience, up the Heavenly Way."

There are two classes of people in this world to whom the Easter hope offers peculiar conso-

lation. The first is the child who never saw its mother. Either the child's coming into the world was the cause of the mother's going out of the world, or else the mother passed away before the child was old enough to remember her. Never to have seen your mother's face suggests a loss pathetic beyond the power of words to express. I have a friend—now a grandmother—whose own mother died when she was a little child. One of the unrequited yearnings of her soul was to see her mother. With unsatisfied longing, she longed through the years just to have a glimpse of her mother's face. And lo! one night her mother appeared to her in a dream! She awoke from her dream satisfied. Ever since she has been sweetly satisfied with that dream-revelation of her mother's likeness. God not only gives His beloved sleep, but He *gives to His beloved in sleep.* Explain this incident as we may, it simply confirms the truth that more things are wrought by God in His universe than philosophers either dream of or know anything about. Easter says that God has our absent mothers in His own dear keeping.

The second class is composed of mothers whose children went away and left them years ago. Little pilgrims in the big universe, they tarried for a brief while in their mother's arms, and then set out again upon the path of the unreturning, veiled in silence and concealment. The mother

remembers her child as if the intervening years were but an instant long. The soil of her soul puts forth fresh flowers of grief as the seasons of God come and go. Does the child remember its mother? How will the mother know her own child when she walks still motheringly through the celestial nurseries? These are profound questions, in a sense, quite unanswerable questions; but they are not far-fetched, unless we may so speak of some of the most sacred emotions of which the human spirit is capable. True, the Master says that in that world, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels; yet He does not even hint that we are, therefore, to be heartless, mindless, soulless, less deeply human than when we tabernacled in tents of clay. Love is the true answer to all these otherwise unanswerable questions. A poet—our friend and neighbor, Doctor Rossiter W. Raymond—has asked and answered this question of earth's grief-stricken, forward-looking mothers:

"How shall I find thee in the throng?
Ah, love knows how to recognize,
Through all the thunder of the song
And blaze of starry eyes.

"Not long, my soul, that happy day
From its delight shall stand apart:
O child, my child! thou wilt obey
The crying of my heart."

Easter bids us hope that ours is a universe in which the crying heart is answered by infinite satisfactions and luminous solutions.

The Easter epiphany suggests, furthermore, that the tomb is the sanctuary of white, of bloom, of beauty, of splendor, not a rendezvous of black and mirk and gloom. I am not an authority on style, but I do confess a deep admiration for the dress of that "young man" who came down from the Hills of Light. How was he dressed? What was the color of his clothing? Black? No. Brown? No. Gray? No. He was "arrayed in a white robe." The colors of the rainbow failed to meet his requirement. They are brilliant enough, but they fade. So this "young man" walked in behind the rainbow and ordered his clothing from the loom of pure white, which contains all the rays of the spectrum combined, untinted with any of the flashing colors. He wore the mother-white, out of which all the colors are born. Will you please tell me, then, why we still persist in making our funeral colors from scraps of midnight instead of from patterns of morning? Heaven has floated its predominant color over the battlements, as if to say: "White is the eternal style. Everybody wears white here. You must be white through and through before you can enter this place. Kindly leave your black behind. It will make you unpleasantly conspicuous." Are not the angels clothed in linen

pure and white? Do not the undefiled walk with the Lord in white? Was there not given to each of the souls underneath the altar a white robe? Were not those who came out of great tribulation robed in white? Is not the throne of God, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, a great white throne? Oh, let us have more of Heaven's whiteness and less of earth's blackness!

III

Consider, finally, that the moods of perplexity and wonder pass into the greater mood of triumph. Easter does not represent a half-finished work; rather is it the time when the Self-Conscious Soul of the Universe utters Himself in full-toned, majestic completion and victory. In a word, Christ's tomb becomes vocal—angelically vocal. First, it makes a confession. "O Women of the Dawn," it says, "be not amazed at what you behold! I, the Tomb, am the arch-deceiver of the race, and now at last I am discovered. I have kept all the generations in bondage up to this good hour. From the cradle, little children have been taught to approach me with fear; the monarch on his throne has turned pale as thoughts of me flashed through his mind; the philosopher boasted of his knowledge until I lifted my finger, and then he grew meekly still; my shadow has always darkened the luster of the

rich man's gold; not one born of woman but has yielded to my prowess; the billions of mankind have walked forth only to find me—vast, gloomy, unfathomable, the all-engulfing abyss of terror—standing athwart their path. But here and now, Women of the Morning, let me make my confession. I hold not the sting of death, nor is victory with me. The Lord of Life, the King of Glory, yielded Himself to my dark embrace. I thought that I had conquered even Him, and that was the proudest moment in my long career of conquest. But I, the dark, forbidding Tomb, knew not His power. Even while He lay here in my bosom, all the dead crowded round to behold Him. So mighty was He in His terrible stillness that the citizens of realms invisible were thrown into excitement and threatened to unpeople Hades. But at last there came a shudder that made the universe quiver to its foundations, a cosmic thrill that troubled the stars, angels and archangels ceased from their anthems, devils and demons forgot to blaspheme,—and lo! the Crucified arose, laid aside the cerements of death, and walked forth from my gloom and doom, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords! Be not amazed! This is the way Life acts in the utmost interiors of reality. You have been living on the outer crust of things. Come in now, try me, and see if I, the Tomb, am not a place of Wonder and Joy and Life and Beauty and Bloom. Do not

fear me! Be not amazed! I am the transfigured door the Christ of God opens into the peace, the welcome, the rest, the bliss, and the kiss of Home!"

The Tomb has a message also. "Tell everybody," it says, "what you have seen and heard here. Go tell His disciples, and Peter. Tell even the most discouraged and heartbroken disciple in the earth—tell Peter, who denied the Lord, that He is risen. Tell everybody in the world that He still leads on, the King Eternal, going before His pilgrim hosts. He has transformed the universe into an Infinite Galilee—a gloriously holy place, where you may see Him, as He said unto you. His promises are yea and amen. The stars shall fail in their orbits sooner than His words shall fail you. Faithfully doth He keep His engagements in time and in eternity. He came and tabernacled in your human dust that He might blaze forth His glory in and through and beyond all dust. He who made the worlds condescendingly besought the worlds to provide Him His body of humiliation. But now hath He sanctified dust, death, suffering, and sorrow; now hath He gone up on high, leading captivity captive; now is He preparing a place for all reconciled souls, organizing a Universal Republic of God, from which autocracy, war, sin, pain, and crying shall be banished forever and forever. Therefore, tell everybody that death is dead, that the Lord Christ is risen, and from the throne of the

worlds He says: 'I am the first and the last, and the Living One; I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and Hades!'"

Wherefore, let us be of good cheer, even in the presence of man's last enemy. For we are under the guidance of a God who hath ordained that this corruptible *must* put on incorruption, that this mortal *must* put on immortality. Physical death is the obedient servant of the Easter Christ; He makes it serve the divine order and spiritual ends of the universe. The truth is immortally sung in Blanco White's sonnet, "To Night," which Coleridge thought the greatest in any language:

"Mysterious night! when our first parent knew
Thee by report divine and heard thy name,
Did he not tremble for this lovely frame,
This glorious canopy of light and blue?
Yet 'neath a curtain of translucent dew,
Bathed in rays of the great setting flame,
Hesperus with all the host of heaven came,
And creation widened in man's view.

"Who could have thought such darkness lay concealed
Within thy beams, O sun? Or who could find,
Whilst fly, and leaf, and insect stood revealed,
That to such countless orbs thou mad'st us blind?
Why, then, should we shun death with anxious strife?
If light can thus deceive, wherefore not life."

X

CHRISTIAN MEMORIALS*

"Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her."—St. Mark xiv. 9.

THIS New Testament scene is one of mankind's immortal histories. It is not surprising that this is so. Given such persons as the Christ, Lazarus, and Mary, we are mysteriously aware that high thoughts and great deeds must follow in their train. The adequate person is always equal to the unusual task. That is why personality is the crowning grandeur of the universe. Because there is such a person as the living God, man holds the key that unlocks the door of wonder to all that was, and is, and shall be. What is Nature but the visible robe in which the Invisible clothes Himself? What is Man but Nature raised to supreme perfection,—the God who clothes Himself in Nature's many-colored garments being the same who gives self-consciousness, will, reason, and imagination to

*Memorial Sunday Sermon in Reformed Church-on-the-Heights, May 26, 1918; preached also in Broadway Tabernacle, July 28, 1918.

His human child? Man, says the seer, has all that Nature has, but more; and in that *more* lie all his hopes of good. In other words, what God could not put into Nature, and all the lower orders of animate being, He packed into that jewel-box named Man's Soul. I suppose one reason why the idea of Eternity has taken a permanent foothold in the human mind is this: Eternity will be required to reveal the hidden beauty of Man's spiritual jewels; Eternity alone can disclose the ultimate possibilities of the powers of love, thought, and work lodged in Man's being.

Therefore, when we have the Lord of Life; when we have Lazarus, who walked in behind the curtain of death and returned again to this dying world; when we have Mary, a bit of human fragrance blown from the Gardens of God—when these three stand before us in speech and action, we shall have something to think and talk about as long as thought and language endure. Turning, then, to this ever-beautiful story, what took place which the Master calls an ageless memorial? In breaking that alabaster box, does Mary manifest some of the immutable laws, does she release some of the dynamic forces which are in perpetual operation in human life? And is it possible to interpret the sacrifice, the heroism, and the agony of our world to-day in the light of the truth flashing forth from that modest home in

Bethany? This is the theme to which, I pray, we may profitably address ourselves.

I

Consider, first, that the genius of appreciation is one of the abiding principles of a Christian memorial. "There came a woman having an alabaster cruise of ointment of pure nard, very costly." Of course the critic, the fault-finder was there, janglingly in evidence then as always. Scribe and Pharisee and traitor unanimously protested against such unnecessary waste. They represent the type of mind which insists that life must be conducted upon the rigidly economic basis; that sentiment and beauty have no place in the world's affairs; that bluff common sense and unadorned practicality are the only considerations worth while in the education of the race. Fortunately, the finest things in history stand opposed to Judas and his kind. Man is never supremely at home in the actual, but in the ideal. Human nature refuses to adjust itself, permanently, to stocks and stones, to the mere goods and comforts of existence. If man experiences terrible leanings toward evil, he also experiences glorious reactions toward good. Suppress his nobler strivings as he may, man is doomed to nurse the unconquerable hope, he must still reckon with the inviolable truth. He cannot elude it. It will

haunt him and torment him; it will smite him with dreadful retributions; it will pursue him to the last marge of the world; it will track him to the lowest deeps of hell. God will see to it that man does not escape from the truth that he was made for God, that in God he must live and move and have his being, or else remain a lost soul in a universe ceaselessly patrolled and hunted through by the living God, who is the psalmist's and poet's "Hound of Heaven," the prophet's "Ancient of Days," the apostle's "God and Father of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ." Consequently, over against the spirit of unrighteous protest, the Judas-spirit, stands the Mary-spirit, the spirit of outpoured and beautiful appreciation—the genius that utters its great love in great living.

What a splendid opportunity, then, to give the genius of appreciation right of way in our hearts today! Surely, never since our planet evolved from the fire-mist and became a habitable globe, have so many human beings laid down their lives in the struggle for freedom, for righteousness, for justice. Think of the little children, the mothers, the wives, the sisters, the aged and infirm who have been wantonly sacrificed upon the altar of Teutonic lust and beastiality! Think of the soldiers, millions upon millions of them, who have died that civilization might not be given over to the jungle! Think of the heroic dead, of the

maimed living, of those who wear soul-scars time cannot heal, and consider whether you have not an alabaster cruise of gratitude to empty upon these worthy masters of us all! "In Wonder all Philosophy began," said Coleridge; "in Wonder it ends: and Admiration fills up the interspace." What thoughts can exhaust our wonder, what words can express our admiration, for the millions of men, women, and children who have died for us and for generations unborn? "Stranger," ran an epitaph at Thermopylæ, "go tell the Lacedemonians that we lie here in obedience to their orders!" As we break our alabasters of thanksgiving upon the memories of these martyrs to German militarism, we know that they lie in our world-Thermpylæ in obedience to the orders of God, the voice of right in the soul of man. God helping them, they could do no other than give their all for things dearer than life itself. Yet is it not just this that bids us hope? Men would rather die than live in a world ground down by autocracy, falsehood, brutality, and indecency. So long as this spirit lives in the human heart, both the devil and the kaiser are doomed, both must at last be locked up in the hells they have created. Meantime, each of us, as we recall our International Gettysburg and remember what these brave souls have done there, may well imitate the eminently beautiful spirit of Mary of Bethany, giving the genius of appre-

ciation full sway over our hearts and minds. As there came a woman then, so there comes a woman now—Katharine Tynan—who splendidly voices the sentiment of every devoutly grateful human:

"Pinks and syringa in the garden closes,
And the sweet privet hedge and golden roses,
The pines hot in the sun, the drone of the bee:—
They die in Flanders to keep these for me.

"The long sunny days and the still weather,
The cuckoo and blackbird shouting together,
The lambs calling their mothers out on the lea:—
They die in Flanders to keep these for me.

"Daisies are leaping in foam on the green grasses,
The dappled sky and the stream that sings as it passes;
These are bought with a price, a bitter fee:—
They die in Flanders to keep these for me."

II

A second law governing Christian memorials is the sense of timeliness. This is emphasized by the Master in the words: "Let her alone....For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will, ye may do them good: but Me ye have not always." Mary divines it, and our Lord recognizes it also, that certain glorious deeds must be performed at particular times, or never. We believe that the Divine plans are long plans, that God is not confined to time-measurements as mortals are, that one day with the Lord is as a

thousand years, and a thousand years are as one day. Emerson gives this truth classic setting in his aphorism that life's chief lesson is to learn what the centuries have to say against the hours. Nevertheless, along with the doctrine of the divine leisureliness goes the doctrine of the divine hurry. There are crucial epochs in the history of the world and the universe. The slow, orderly methods, having fulfilled their mission of preparation, give place to the tense, the catastrophic, the energetic. Eternal purposes are then molten hot on the anvils of God, and they must be hammered into shape while under the formative power of seething flame. Thus, while the strides of God may be geologically slow and leisurely, they may also be swift as lightning, terrible as doom, irreversible as fate. The hands on the clock of history have not moved forward without interruption. There is scarcely a century but holds the story of some highwayman breaking into the house of civilization and attempting to turn the hands of God's timepiece backward. Usually, kings have been the villains in this historic drama. How many times have these autocratic monsters been caught red-handed in their efforts to hold up the chariots of God! It is all a grim, ghastly story from the Ahabs to the Hohenzollerns. Yet history verifies this fact: The hands on God's clock, when turned backward, did not remain where the vandals would have them; the

chariots of God, though temporarily stuck in the mudholes of autocracy, have invariably moved out and up the highways of progress!

Yet, for all of man's hard-won ethical and spiritual gains, we are indebted to the high souls who knew, like Mary, that their beautiful and immortal deeds had to be performed at certain critical times. Thus, counting their lives not dear unto themselves, aware that it was now or never, that it was to-day and not to-morrow, this year and not the next, our modern warriors of God have stood at the cross-roads of civilization and challenged the oncoming hordes of scientific barbarians. Ask yourselves this question: Why is not the world to-day one vast Belgium of ruin, one bloody Armenia of woe, one hungry Servia of starvation, one wailing Roumania of despair, one chaotic Russia of anarchy? Why? Civilization is not a corpse, my friends, because the passion of timeliness surged through the millions of souls whose broken young bodies sanctify the very dust of our planet. When the bugles of duty called, they made instant answer. Choosing flame and blood for their garments of glory, they walked through poisoned atmosphere across the shuddering earth, some to be crucified, others to be maimed, many to be starved, all to be persecuted and maltreated! When General Petain went to the defense of Verdun, he said to his soldiers: "The Germans *must not* pass!" The soldiers said: "They *shall*

not pass!" History says: "They *did not* pass!" Are we worthy to live in the same world with such as these?

III

The third element of a Christian memorial is the consecration of our best. Mary's ointment of spikenard is described as "very costly." This woman gave her most precious gift; she consecrated the finest she had.

And are we not pouring out our best to-day upon the altars of freedom and humanity? Consider our airmen—these high-hearted youth who cleave the blue on mechanical wings. They are on most intimate terms with death. Other fighters may die; it is almost a mathematical certainty that these sailors of the upper deeps *must* die. It is only a question of time, and they know it; yet are they strangers to fear, unacquainted with hesitation in the presence of duty, eager to accept the barbarian's challenge. And they are among the bravest, most promising of earth—these men of indomitable daring who ride on terribly swift wings! No wonder their parents take a sacred pride in them. What a letter is this I have from the father of one of our New Jersey fliers, killed abroad. "The memory of our boy," he writes, "is very precious to us, as it always will be, *and we have every comfort, and even experience of joy, which could be had by human*

hearts." I have italicized these last phrases. I submit that they are not ordinary words, nor was it an ordinary son that these parents have given, nor is it an ordinary experience that sustains them now. Indeed, is it not all so richly Christ-like as to produce an extraordinary treatise on immortality? Heaven is more than a theory to these dear hearts, because they have here and now such sacred raptures out of the Unseen as words cannot utter. And what shall we say of our sailor lads? The deep was never so terrible as to-day. Never since that first ancient mariner discovered that a log would keep his body from sinking, to this destiny-fraught hour when great floating palaces go to sea, has old ocean been infested with such unspeakable horrors! It was the lot of other times to experience the cruelty of wind and wave, the ferocity of shark, and whale, and sea-monster; it is our own bitter lot to experience the ferocity of the Hun, whose submarine piracy is indicative of the awful abysses of iniquity to which the German soul has plunged. Yet these sea-wolves are powerless to frighten our sailors off the high seas. Going from Brooklyn to New Jersey recently, I asked one of our naval boys to ride in my car. He belongs to the transport service. I asked him if he was not afraid to cross the sea now. Oh, the look he gave me! Coming back in the late afternoon, I picked up another sailor boy at the Twenty-third Street ferry. He, too,

belongs to the transport service. I asked him the same question I had asked my new-found friend of the morning: Was he not afraid of the German soul dressed up in the submarine? Oh, the look he gave me! Would to God the kaiser and von Tirpitz might have seen the expression on the faces of those two American boys! I think even they would at last understand that they cannot frighten youths suckled on the nutritious breasts of freedom. Kill their bodies, put out their eyes, cripple them, poison them, but their souls will go marching on; and when the last tyrant is dead, their spirits will be present at the funeral to join in the song of liberty and brotherhood which shall yet be heard around the world. Like the airmen and sailors, our soldiers are also the best the world has. England, France, Italy, Belgium, Servia, and now, thank God, America, have consecrated their noblest. The ages have seen none braver, none more heroic, none more unselfish. For this is not one of the old battles among kings; it is a battle of ideas and ideals; there is no longer room for these two conflicting principles upon the earth. Therefore, we are all in it, and we shall stay in it to the last ship, the last airplane, the last gun, the last man, the last woman, the last child—if need be! Go tell the kaiser, tell him so that he cannot possibly mistake your meaning, that when he realizes his dream of world empire, *not a single American*

will be alive to know anything about it! And then add this further statement: Inasmuch as downfall will be his reality, though world empire is his dream, there will be a great multitude out of all tribes and kingdoms and peoples, who will send up such a hymn of praise to the throne of God the day his doom is sealed, that hell will be moved from beneath and heaven shaken from above!

John Mott has said that he would rather live the first ten years after the war than at any other period in history. Oh, if all those who have made that good coming era possible could be here also! I speak not alone of those who have actually died in battle, but of all sacrificial, liberty-loving souls. Such an one was Lieutenant Earl Trumbull Williams, a member of the Reformed Church-on-the-Heights. His sudden and untimely death by accident has cut short a career of vital promise. Yet all his dreams of a better world-state, for which he enthusiastically offered his life; all his unrealized aspirations for a better country, politically and socially—all these good things that he and his spiritual comrades throughout the world have both dreamed and willed, shall exist, as Browning teaches,—not their semblance, but their innermost reality. He belongs to that noble company—the best our world has to give—celebrated by Mr. Letts:

"I saw the spires of Oxford
As I was passing by,
The gray spires of Oxford
Against a pearl-gray sky.
My heart was with the Oxford men
Who went abroad to die.

"The years go fast in Oxford,
The golden years and gay;
The hoary colleges look down
On careless boys at play.
But when the bugles sounded war
They put their games away.

"They left the peaceful river,
The cricket-field, the quad,
The shaven lawns of Oxford
To seek a bloody sod—
They gave their merry youth away
For country and for God.

"God rest you, happy gentlemen,
Who laid your good lives down,
Who took the khaki and the gun
Instead of cap and gown.
God bring you to a fairer place
Than even Oxford town."

IV

There is a final element of the true Christian memorial. It is God's recognition of the offering. "And verily I say unto you, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." Revealing as

they do Christ's attitude toward Mary's gift, do not these words give us a clue to the Heart of the Eternal? Is not that Heart most wonderfully kind, most paternally sensitive to the love of His children? "Ah," but you say, "the memorial here spoken of is for Mary alone." In a sense, that is true; no other can occupy precisely the same place in the New Testament as Mary. Moreover, there is only one New Testament, and any name appearing therein, whether good or bad, is forever doomed to fame. But in a greater sense, in Christian principle and reality, this truth is for all time and for every soul. A beautiful deed, like Mary's, is always acceptable to God, is always recognized by Him. Therefore, do you tell me that God is unaware of the offerings made by our "golden lads and girls" during these four agonizing years? Why, God has wept enough tears since August, 1914, to melt even the soul of the Hun, and yet it goes on unmelted. Perchance that soul is so frozen that God's fires must continue to burn and purge it until every drop of Belgian blood drawn by the Prussian lash shall be paid by another drawn by the Allied sword, and until all the plunder piled by the German war lords shall be sunk, so that even Berlin shall have to confess, as was said three thousand years ago, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether." Oh, yes, God knows, God cares, God accepts the offerings we make on be-

half of his broken, crying, bleeding, starving little ones! Three days before the Germans killed him, a French soldier lad wrote: "You know, Daddy, that I am quite ready, because, for me, the beauty of life is much more than life itself." Witness, also, this good confession of a second French soldier: "They cannot take my life. I give it for peace. I give it for the peaceful kingdom of Christ on earth." Tell me, where is God, when such truths as these flash out of human spirits? He is not even so far as to be near. This *is* the Eternal God—willing through a human will, living in a human soul, talking through a human mouth! No, my friends not for Mary only, but the Lord's gracious recognition is for every doer of beautiful, Christly deeds at the front, in the hospital, at home, anywhere, everywhere! And it is because we believe that this is Christian truth that we are highly resolved, as Allies of Righteousness, to be so worthy of these dead that they may not have died in vain, and to answer the mute prayer they pray in Flanders' Fields. Colonel John McRae, now sleeping among those dead himself, wrote both the prayer and the answer:

"In Flanders' fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place, and in the sky
The larks still bravely singing fly,
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders' fields.

"Take up our quarrel with the foe!
To you, from falling hands, we throw
The torch—be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die,
We shall not sleep though poppies grow
In Flanders' fields."

And here is the answer of the nations:

"O guns, fall silent till the dead men hear
Above their heads the legions pressing on.
(These fought their fight in time of bitter fear
And died not knowing how the day had gone.)

"O flashing muzzles, pause and let them see
The coming dawn that streaks the sky afar!
Then let your mighty chorus witness be
To them, and Cæsar, that we still make war.

"Tell them, O guns, that we have heard their call;
That we have sworn and will not turn aside;
That we will onward till we win or fall;
That we will keep the faith for which they died.

"Bid them be patient, and some day, anon,
They shall feel earth enwrapt in silence deep—
Shall greet in wonderment the quiet dawn,
And in content may turn them to their sleep."

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